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# AFRICA— A WORLD IN PROGRESS

An American Family in West Africa

*by*

**VIRGINIA CONE**

*Illustrated*

*An Exposition-Banner Book*

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*To*  
**MAISIE *and* WALTER**  
**who made Ghana a reality**

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## Preface

THE SEEDS from which this book sprung were planted when my husband came home from World War II. I have always been fascinated by his stories of his two and one-half years in Africa. I was envious when he went alone to Ghana's independence celebrations in 1957. When the opportunity came in 1958 for all the family to go to the new University College of Ghana on the west coast of Africa for one year, there was no hesitation.

It was not always an easy year but it was always an interesting one. West Africa is an exciting place, ever changing, developing, experimenting and full of eager people who are "going places."

Friends who had lived in Ghana for several years told me early that if I didn't write down my impressions in the beginning, I could never do it. Dr. William Hudson, president of Blackburn College, my alma mater, was most persuasive. So I wrote them first for my family at home and then decided to share them with others who are interested in the new Africa. I hope people who read this will be challenged to say, "Why can't we do something like this?"

Here are the problems, adjustments, and frustrations that face an American family living 7500 miles away from home in unaccustomed tropical heat. Here are also the new experiences, joys, and real fun that one faces in day-to-day living in a different kind of world.

Mary Kingsley, the famous missionary, wrote that after a tour of West Africa one always wants to return. She is so right, for we are now planning our next trip to Nigeria.

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## CHAPTER I

### Good-bye to Indiana

IT WAS OUR LAST DAY at home. Our bags were packed, our car had been delivered to its new owner, and the house keys were on the table ready to be handed over to the teachers who would live in our house. Very close behind us were all the minor tremors and stresses preliminary to preparing for our journey to West Africa. We had received the numerous shots and done the thousand little things that precede the final exhausted "good-bye."

Shopping and packing for ourselves and three children had been hectic enough, but our twenty-one-year-old daughter, Leslie, had decided to get married at the end of her summer camp job. So we had had to give a large church wedding just two days before we took off. That whole final week I felt as though life were a jumbled jigsaw puzzle. There were farewell parties, the wedding with packages and guests arriving, clothes to be bought for the wedding, clothes to be bought for London and for Africa, the house to prepare for rental for the year, last minute bills—our life was a scramble of "last minutes"—and in the back of my mind I kept hoping that all the pieces would fall into place by Tuesday, August 26, 1958.

I had little time to think about the familiar conveniences that were a part of our life—newspapers, daily mail and milk deliveries to our door, telephone shopping, street lights, bus service, a drugstore on the corner—things we'd sharply miss. Perhaps it is just as well to be frantically busy and have no time for doubts or questions. The wheels were in motion. There was no going back, doubts notwithstanding. Fall was already in

the air that August day and although Africa's brilliant sun and palm-tree coast were familiar to us through pictures, it was quite impossible to realize we would soon be a part of that exotic scene. That day it just seemed a world away from Purdue and Indiana. We finally fell into bed the last night at 2 A.M. and at 3 A.M. we were up again with six-year-old George who had a temperature of 103 and a nasty sore throat. I immediately unpacked one of my precious bottles of acromycin and started giving him regular doses. Sleep was quite out of the question and the only thing that kept going through my mind was that the plane left O'Hare International Airport at 9:30 A.M. and that we all must be on it. We were, which still seems a minor miracle.

Those last-minute catastrophes are amusing now but they definitely weren't then. Ten miles from home, George discovered that he had left his pillow behind and began crying that he had to have it. Fortunately our friend Michell Hirst, who was driving us to the airport, has steady nerves and unending patience so he turned around quickly amid the moans and protestations and drove back to get it. Then we had to drive madly through the rush-hour traffic to get to the airport on time. It seemed we'd only gotten through the door with our eleven pieces of luggage when we heard our names over the loud-speaker asking us to please board. The friends who had come to see us off all ran down the wrong stairs with us (and of course had to run right back up) trying to help us carry cameras, typewriter, brief case, dolls, duffel bag, pillow, and small bags. Michell insists that in the shuffle and melee he kissed our very dignified minister, Reverend P. Ammerman, a fond good-bye instead of me.

We pushed through the gate to board, and there was our Stratocruiser in the bright sunshine, long and powerful and ready to go. We wistfully looked back at the airport and at our friends behind the barriers and then climbed the steps quickly and entered the plane. Our seats were well forward, my husband and I on one side of the plane with nineteen-year-old

Jan sitting between small Henrietta and George on the other side. In a few minutes the door was closed. The engines started up one by one with a deafening roar and revved up to take-off speed; and then very gently the great plane wheeled around and began to taxi across the air field. It turned, stopped, and we could see the long runway stretching straight in front of the plane. The plane trembled and suddenly, with barely a jolt, it began to rise. The people on the ground looked small and far away, the houses seemed like doll houses set in a row, the roads from O'Hare field dwindled to strips of ribbon, and the Chicago suburb became a story-book Lilliput. We were off to adventure! London tomorrow morning—the first leg of our journey to West Africa.

For the first time in months, I had time to think. For it was just three months since we definitely decided to go to Ghana, on the west coast of Africa, for a year. Three months was a very short time to tear up our house, beg for leaves of absence from Purdue University where we both taught, get all our shots, passports, visas, air reservations, sell the car, and marry off our daughter. We also had made reservations and planned a five-weeks' tour of England and the Continent on our way out to Africa. I felt like the soldier who waits tensely for the big battle-day and when it begins, says with relief, "No matter what happens, thank God, at last I am on the way."

This was the children's and my first trip to Africa, but it was my husband's third trip. Win had been in the Nineteenth Weather Squadron attached to the Air Transport Command during World War II and had been stationed in several parts of Africa, including Ghana, for two and one-half years. He had also spent a year and a half in the Middle East. After the war, he kept on studying, doing research, and writing on Africa. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago, and now was Associate Professor in the History Department at Purdue University. In 1957, he took a sabbatical and spent a month in Ghana at the time that that country received its independence from Great Britain. It was the first black country

to get dominion status within the British Commonwealth. Win has several friends in Ghana and had taken excellent colored slides of the University College of Ghana, Accra, and surrounding countryside. It was not a completely strange place to which we were going—or so I told myself.

I had done some studying and reading on Ghana and West Africa and I did not take lightly the tales of the sinister deadliness of the West Coast climate. For years this part of Africa has been known as the white man's grave. Graham Greene wrote, "The phrase 'the white man's grave' has become a music-hall cliché to those who have never seen the little crumbling cemeteries of the West Coast." It has also been said that no one ever worries about the terms of his pension if he's assigned to the West Coast, for he never lives long enough to retire. We knew life had improved there due to mosquito control, modern medicine, and better diet. We also knew that the family who had lived in the house that we were to have in the coming year at the University College had lost their small child just before Christmas last year with typhoid fever. We didn't share our families' and friends' view that we were completely mad to take three children and rush off to Africa of all places! They plainly said that if we were sane we would have gone to some nice civilized place like England or Switzerland.

But we wanted to go to Ghana to teach in the new University College for a year. We wanted to meet the students and people firsthand and see how they lived and what they were thinking. We both felt strongly that Africa will play an increasingly decisive role in the world in the next decade and that Ghana would be a good place to observe. We would be the first Americans to teach throughout Ghana in the Extra-Mural Studies program. When Ghana was an English colony, still called the Gold Coast, it drew few Americans. We were looking forward to it enthusiastically. In the age of atoms and jets, West Africa has lost much of its harsh, exciting exclusiveness. It is no longer the end of the line or only for those bent on power or self-sacrifice or solitude.

Our children, like children everywhere, didn't want to pull up roots and leave their friends and school and home. In the summer we heard our little boy telling a neighbor, Mrs. Freeman, that he would be glad to go to Africa so he could hurry up and get it over with and come back home. But by the time we had toured England for three weeks, visited the World's Fair in Brussels, climbed the Eiffel Tower in Paris, and shivered at the top of Mt. Blanc, they were ready and anxious to go on to Rome. They knew that that was the last stop before Africa and our new home. Any kind of a house would do fine after living out of suitcases and in hotels for five weeks. Now they could not wait and counted the days until we would be there. We took all of our fall clothes down to the American Express in Rome and had them shipped home.

At last we left Rome for Accra. Planes usually fly over the Sahara at night, as it is less bumpy due to cooler air currents. The plane was crowded, as it had come from London and was full of families returning from annual leave for another year. It was hot, and thick with cigarette smoke, and it was difficult to sleep or settle down with children going up and down the aisle for water every five minutes. Babies cried, and my tweed skirt felt hot and itchy. I could imagine I was already in the tropics. It was a beautiful, clear night with a full moon. As I finally settled myself, my thoughts were 20,000 feet below, and I seemed to hear the camel trains padding slowly on their long journey to the far-famed Bight of Benin a thousand years ago.

Suddenly it was six o'clock, and we were setting down for breakfast in Kano in northern Nigeria. Kano—our first look at Africa! As we stepped stiffly from the plane, a strange scent made up of flowers, of hot earth, and of blistering asphalt met us. Kano is a few miles south of the dry, burning heat of the Sahara desert. We could feel the very breath of Africa as we had lukewarm coffee under the swinging fans in the airport lounge. Kano is one of the busiest and most important airports in Africa. British, Dutch, French, Belgian, American, and other lines use it as an essential stop on their route across the conti-

ment. It handles 1,000 plane movements a month and 150,000 passengers a year. Sitting in that modern airport, it was hard to realize that around this ancient and fantastic city 130,000 people live. The airplane is probably the most beautiful and exhilarating tool of travel we are ever likely to invent. But it has a disadvantage in that it gives the traveller no time to prepare for the new. Each journey is an assault on the senses and imagination. You spend the first hour after you land trying to catch up with your body. That was my reaction to Kano; I couldn't quite believe I was in Africa. It was as unreal as the the vultures sitting confidently on top of the buildings and peering down at us.

After refueling, we took off for Accra, some 750 miles further southwest. At first the ground was sandy with scrub bushes and scattered rows of crops. The scene changed and there were sluggish, red rivers, curving their way to the sea; spreading between them was the jungle, deep and wild. Then it thinned again, and there were more rivers and lagoons and red salt marsh and then, suddenly, the sea—a sea of deepest violet, moved by huge rolling breakers and ringed with palm trees, brilliantly green on a line of silver sand. The tiny footpaths and villages grew larger and clearer as the plane approached Accra. We fled over the University College. It stood on an emerald hill, in the brilliant sunshine, gleaming white with bright-red tile roofs. We fastened our seat belts. After a jolt and a few bumps, we settled down. The long journey was over. Indiana was 7,500 miles away.

A breath of sweet, warm air from the sun-and-rain-soaked airport came in when a brisk-looking official entered the plane and thoroughly sprayed plane and passengers with D.D.T. This is routine in tropical countries because of mosquitos and insects which may be transported from one country to another. As we walked down the steps of the plane, the intense heat rose towards us from the baking asphalt. Even the cool, white buildings of the air terminal shimmered in the heat. The tweed coat over my arm seemed unbearably heavy. Inside the customs

room it was not quite so blindingly bright, but just as hot. We filled out immigration forms, health forms, and a customs declaration. We were treated with great courtesy by efficient African clerks and hostesses in neat uniforms. Finally, we claimed our luggage in a large room filled with chaos, Europeans and Nigerian traders and staggered out with dry throats and Africa-dazzled eyes into the bright afternoon. This was to be home for the next year.

## CHAPTER II

### Home on the Hill

GHANA HAS A POPULATION of close to 6,000,000 of which about 16,000 are non-African, a ratio of one to three hundred. The country is over 99 per cent Negro. It covers some 92,000 square miles, roughly the size of Indiana and Illinois combined, and comprises a coast line, forest belt, and grassland. Illiteracy is calculated at over 70 per cent of the population although it is improving rapidly with 680,000 children now in primary schools.

Ghana is divided into three separate sections: southern Ghana which includes the Accra plain, a semidesert strip along the coast; the Ashanti Kingdom in the rain-forest belt in the middle; and the Northern Territory in the dry savannah land in the north. Ghana was called the Gold Coast State until it was renamed in 1957 at the time it received its independence. While most historians agree that the present peoples of Ghana came as conquerors of aboriginal tribes who used stone implements and made elaborately decorated pottery, their origins have been the subject of several theories.

Of these, the prevailing theory links the Akan people of modern Ghana by direct descent with the people of the great empire of Ghana, which flourished in the western French Sudan (what now comprises the Mali Federation) more than a thousand years ago. This empire had reached a high degree of civilization when it was overthrown by the Moslems in 1076. Many of its people fled southwards, eventually, it is believed, as far as Ashanti and the coastal plains.

The British established a foothold in the sixteenth century. Although they came with the Portuguese, the Dutch, the Danes,



the Swedes, and the Prussians, they alone became dominant. It was not easy. There were eight different Ashanti wars, and the British intervened to help the more civilized Fanti tribes along the coast resist aggression by the warlike Ashanti. These wars caused so much trouble that British public opinion called for the English to pull out of the Gold Coast altogether. As Joyce Cary wrote, "We didn't want the damned place." But in 1874 the British consolidated the various coastal settlements into the Gold Coast Colony and it became part of the empire. The British marched against Kumasi, the Ashanti capital, and burned it to the ground in 1874. There followed a truce until 1895 when the British demanded that King Prempeh accept a protectorate. When he refused, he was conquered. Ashanti was added to the British Crown in 1901.

Then came the hassle over the Golden Stool. This throne, sacred to the Ashanti kings, is much more than a mere symbol. It was supposed to have been handed down from heaven in a black cloud, and it is considered literally to be the soul of the Ashanti people. The British governor of the Gold Coast ill-advisedly demanded that the Ashanti surrender their revered and holy stool for him to sit on and to send to Queen Victoria. They refused, provoking the eighth and last Ashanti war. The British won the war but they didn't get the stool, as patriotic Ashantis hid it. It was not found until 1921. The Ashanti served notice that if the British took the stool they would go to war again. This time the British knew better and permitted it to remain in Ashanti possession. King Prempeh returned from exile. In 1935, the British recognized the Golden Stool as the sacred symbol of the Ashanti nation, and relations have been smooth since then.

The coastal strip and the Gold Coast Colony proper have had more experience in democratic procedures than any other region in British Africa except that of South Africa. In 1844, Fanti chiefs united themselves into a "bond" under British law and in 1850 they created a "Legislative Assembly of Native Chiefs Upon the Gold Coast." In 1868, they made the first

attempt to establish independent government. Later they formed the first real political party ever known to Black Africa, the "Gold Coast Aborigines Rights Protection Society." The Gold Coast's first constitution, the Guggisberg Constitution, came in 1925. They received another constitution in 1946 under the governorship of Sir Alan Burns. The Legislative Council chosen under this constitution had a Negro majority, the first in the history of British Africa.

Then came Kwame Nkrumah, and eventual independence in 1957. Kwame Nkrumah, Prime Minister of Ghana, has said, "It is far better to be free to govern or misgovern yourself than to be governed by anybody else." His one aim from the time of his college days was independence for his country. He says he studied Gandhi's political philosophy of nonviolence with great interest. He was born to illiterate parents in Nkroful in the Western Province of the Gold Coast in 1909. Nkroful is a typical West African village composed of mud and wattle houses and bamboo compounds. He lived there with his mother until he was nearly three years old. They then joined his father who was a goldsmith in Half Assini some fifty miles away.

Kwame Nkrumah has come a long way from his origin. It was his mother who talked his father into paying his school fees and starting him in the local Catholic school. He liked school. He was afraid that his father wouldn't have the money to continue his fees, so he started raising chickens at seven cents each to help with the school fees and to buy books. After eight years at the elementary school, he started teaching school. Eventually, due to the encouragement of a visiting principal, he enrolled at the Teacher Training College in Accra. It became part of the new Prince of Wales College at Achimota outside Accra in 1928, and Nkrumah was in the first group of students to be trained at Achimota as teachers. He writes that he felt very fortunate to live side by side with the secondary-school students and was able to exchange ideas and learn from them.

It was here that he came under the influence of Dr. Kwegyir Aggrey, Assistant Vice-Principal and the first African member

of the staff. He was profoundly impressed by Dr. Aggrey's philosophy that the black and white races should work together. Aggrey was opposed to any racial segregation and was proud of his color. His favorite saying was, "You can play a tune of sorts on the white keys, and you can play a tune of sorts on the black keys, but for harmony you must use both the white and the black." Aggrey had spent twenty years in the United States, and he spoke of it with enthusiasm and affection. It was because of Nkrumah's great admiration for Aggrey both as a man and scholar that he decided to further his studies in the United States. It took eight more years of teaching and saving money, plus financial help from relatives, before he arrived in America and enrolled at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania. He received his degree in economics there in 1939 and a Master's degree in philosophy from University of Pennsylvania in 1943.

He was in the United States ten years. He says that these were years of sorrow, loneliness, poverty, and hard work. He was always in need of money and worked at any job from dish-washing to preaching in Negro churches on Sunday to earn enough money to eat.

He tried to learn techniques of organizations. He says he knew that when he returned to the Gold Coast he would be faced with this problem, for he knew that whatever the program for the solution of the colonial question would be, success would depend upon the organization adopted. He acquainted himself with the Republicans, Democrats, Communists, Trotskyites, N.A.A.C.P. and he even became a Freemason of the thirty-second degree. Always he dreamed of returning to the Gold Coast and leading the fight for independence. While in America, he wrote a pamphlet on this called "Towards Colonial Freedom."

In 1945, he went to Britain for further study at the London School of Economics, quickly became involved in West African politics, and returned to the Gold Coast in 1947 as General Secretary of the United Gold Coast Convention. Two years later, he broke away to form the revolutionary Conventions

People's Party of which he is still leader and life Chairman. Imprisoned for political agitation in 1950 by the British, he was released (because of popular support in the 1951 election) to form a government as Leader of Government Business and later as first Prime Minister of the Gold Coast. In 1954 and 1956, his party was overwhelmingly returned to power on its firm policy of "self government now." On his forty-seventh birthday, September 17, 1956, he declared, amid scenes of wild jubilation, the date for his country's independence—March 6, 1957.

Ghana is a rich country. It is the largest producer of cocoa in the world, supplying more than one-third of the total world crop. Every cocoa farm is African-owned. The Ghana Cocoa Marketing Board, a semistate organization, supervises the industry on a broad basis, buys and sells the crops, accumulating funds for lean years, and contributes heavily to the Ghana economy. Cocoa is the symbol of social advance and progress in Ghana. It provided most of the funds for the new University College of Ghana located on Legon Hill.

The University College was founded in 1948 on recommendation of the Asquith Commission on Higher Education in the Colonies. As a temporary measure, the buildings of the Teacher Training College at Achimota were handed over to house the teaching departments, but in 1948 the government presented to the college more than five square miles of land surrounding Legon Hill, a five-hundred-foot hill rising from the Accra Plains, eight miles north of Accra. On the slopes of this hill and on the plain reaching down to the Dodowah road, the Halls of Residence, the teaching buildings, a library to hold 250,000 books, and many houses for the academic staff have been built. The top of the hill itself is crowned by the immense block of the Convocation Hall and the administrative buildings, from the middle of which rises a 120-foot tower built with a special grant from the government to celebrate Ghana's independence.

Achimota (four miles from Legon, out of which the University College sprang), as a secondary school and Teacher Training College, was one of the best-known educational institu-

tions in British West Africa. Its influence has been profound. Prime Minister Nkrumah, the former Ambassador to the United States, Mr. Chapman, Finance Minister Gbedemah, Cabinet Minister Botsio, and many of the contemporary generation of Ghana's leaders attended the college. Achimota means "Speak no name" and its origin goes far back. Slaves trying to escape would steal away from the coastal stockades five miles away and, if lucky, get as far as Achimota for their first stop. Friendly Africans would hide them even as American slaves were hidden by the underground railway in the United States. Naturally it was too dangerous to mention the names of the escapees or the ones who helped them.

The University College at Legon has established academic standards as high as those of more venerable universities in the Western world. It has avoided the temptation to compromise its standards in order to quickly produce larger numbers of trained men and women—a feat of some magnitude in a country where high nationalistic feeling makes tremendous demands for qualified people.

The college is under the aegis of the Inter-University Council for Higher Education Overseas. This organization, with headquarters in London, deals mainly with the recruiting of staff and promotions. In addition to the College at Legon, the council also supervises the Universities at Idadan (Nigeria), Uganda, Southern Rhodesia, the West Indies, Khartoum, Malta, and Hong Kong.

The principal of the University College of Legon, and 90 per cent of the faculty are English; the rest are African. As more teachers qualify, the percentage of Africans on the staff increases. A special program with the University of London safeguards the maintenance of the highest academic standards.

Twenty-one teaching departments in the university are grouped into five faculties: Arts, Social Studies, Physical Sciences, Biological Sciences, and Agriculture. In 1958 there were 550 students and 140 faculty—a ratio of four students to every teacher. We recalled the huge classes in the States. By

now it is a cliché to moan about overcrowded classrooms, at any level of education. Still, one thinks wistfully of the possibilities of such a ratio. In the next few years, the university expects to double its enrollment. The government already has spent thirty million dollars for the new buildings. The university is one of the show places in Ghana. The people, of course, are tremendously proud of it. It symbolizes growth, freedom, and light—hope for a better life, a richer, more significant life.

We were met at the airport by a university car from the Extra-Mural Department for which Win would teach. The driver was smiling broadly, happy to greet Master and Madame, and drove us to the university, through its impressive gateway, down the long shady avenue lined with brilliant flowering trees through to the college compound to our own furnished bungalow.

Here we found the luxuries of the West: electricity, modern plumbing, telephone, refrigerator and electric stove. Too, we had access to the college buttery. Accra was only eight miles away with modern department stores and the cinema. All staff houses on the college compound were concrete, painted white, and with red tile roofs. Furniture in all the houses was the same, though this removed the need to keep up with the Joneses, it lacked spice and variety.

The interior decoration revealed a sensible tropical influence. Everything was open to get all the available breeze. The long living-dining room had four sets of doors on each side. It was not screened, for the belief was that screens cut down the breeze. It was fine, we discovered, until you had an invasion of insects. The entire bedroom-bath area was screened. We breathed a sigh of relief since we had supposed we would have to sleep under mosquito nets.

There were no curtains, shades, nor Venetian blinds—just shutters that could be closed if necessary. The walls were solid white, which gave an illusion of coolness. The floors and ceilings were of fine Ghanaian mahogany. In each of the three bedrooms

there were twin beds, a dresser, bedside table, and a chair. I remarked to my husband that twin beds pushed together did not make a double bed and wasn't this apt to put a strain on marriages out here? He explained that due to the tropical heat, a double bed would create a greater strain. There is the true story of the senior officer in the university who sent back to England for a real double bed and innerspring mattress. In due time the bed arrived. The first of the month came and he received no salary check. On inquiry, the bursar told him the double bed and freight charges had used up his salary for that month. This is the only record we have of the customary double bed being brought to the university compound.

The living room had six easy chairs and six small tables, a desk and bookcases in one end, a buffet and dining table in the other end. This was quite adequate. The kitchen with its stainless steel sink, hot water heater, big, rough tables, small electric cooker, as they call the stove, and refrigerator was so much more than I had hoped for that I never gave a thought to my jade green electric kitchen back home. It also had a small screened safe, which held flour, sugar, tea, etc., with four legs set in cans of kerosened water which supposedly discouraged ants. But our ants were hard to discourage, and I became used to shaking them out of the sugar bowl, flour and cookie tins. Next to the kitchen were the "stores," or pantry with lock and key. I confess I never locked any food away. If our steward occasionally helped himself, that seemed less trouble than carrying the key around with me and expecting "things to happen."

From our back veranda we looked across nearly an acre of short mowed grass dotted with flowering shrubs and two trees which the children soon learned to climb like monkeys. Here we could sit in the late afternoon and see the ever-changing, troubled sky. Later, the harmattan sun hung in the sky like a round copper ball and always at dusk we could see the big planes from New York, London, and Johannesburg set down at the airport just a few miles from us. The airport was just enough higher than we that we could actually see them land.

We could also see the rooftops of two little African villages and in the distance on a clear day we could get a glimpse of the sea. It was a scene of which we never tired.

The front of our house was clothed richly with vines and blooming bushes. One bush had long, waxy, white flowers which bloomed about every two weeks. The blossoms would open at night. The entire house would be filled with this heavy exotic scent which was quite overpowering. It would still be with us at breakfast time. My husband always felt that such sensual fragrance drifting over our breakfast table was quite wasted, as we spent most of the time urging the two smaller children to "eat your oatmeal," "drink your orange juice," and "stop quarreling with your sister."

I was grieved when the yard boys attacked all the profuse greenery with machetes and clippers. For a few days things would look shorn and disciplined, then almost overnight, fresh shoots and new tendrils would be invading over and under and through the windows. The speed of growth was fantastic. I understood later why it had to be cut so ruthlessly.

Back of the house was really a tropical garden. We had stalks of bananas, fresh pineapples, and pawpaws all year. There were three mulberry trees with delicious berries, and watermelon vines. I had my eye on one melon for days waiting for just the right moment. But alas, so did some little African boy, and he was quicker than I.

Morning comes early in Africa. One's daytime life is governed by the sun's authority—its ascent, blazing noon sway, and late-day waning. At six o'clock in the morning the day looks promising and beautiful; the sky is clear and pure blue. It is cool then, and that is the best part of the day. Stewards, "small-boys," cooks, gardeners, and mammies with boxes of food on their heads are all going to work. The whole compound is astir with laughter, talk, and movement. Everyone is filled with energy. By midmorning the pace begins to slow, the sun's rays grow fierce, tiles become hot under your feet, and metal is like fire to the touch. By noon things come to a standstill. Offices and



stores close until 2 or 2:30 P.M. School is over for the day. There is not a breath of air, and your clothes stick moistly to you. Everyone is content to lie motionless during early afternoon. Then the sun begins to wane and at four o'clock tea revives you and you venture forth again. Soon after six o'clock, darkness falls swiftly. The sun seems to drop behind the darkening horizon, and a breeze comes in from the sea.

As far as staff was concerned, we were most fortunate. We were three adults and two small children, but our ideas of service were modest. We hired a smallboy, Andrews, from French Togoland who was supposed to clean the house, do dishes and run errands. For this we paid him five pounds (fourteen dollars) a month; we paid another smallboy three dollars a month to wash the car once a week. The university furnished gardeners, night watchmen, garbage collectors, and all repair and maintenance. You were supposed to "dash" them (African for gift) on special occasions or holidays. "Dash" is a word used in many ways. It can be money or goods given for a special favor or service; it can be used as a bribe to get special consideration.

We bought a washing machine the second day we were in Ghana. (I did the cooking, as the children were used to my American style.) Andrews soon persuaded us to let the car boy go and said he would wash the car and get breakfast if I'd raise him to twenty dollars a month and call him "Steward." Being used to American wage scales, I was easy and gave in without even an argument. A bachelor friend of ours didn't fare so well. He took a house in Accra and to his surprise found himself with a staff of five people: a cook, steward, night watchman, laundryman, and car boy. He had spoken too loudly of his needs within hearing of interested ears. That was the usual "help" situation if you did not live on the college compound. It seemed that everyone, but everyone, had nephews, brothers, cousins, and friends who were experienced, able, and readily available.

It is hopeless to ask the African servant a direct question, for they want to please and always answer, "Yes, please"

whether it's "Can you make a cheese *soufflé*?" or "Do you understand that you're to turn the oven off at eleven o'clock?" It does not matter in the least that they do not understand a word you say, they'll smile and say, "Yes, please." I tried to trap small-boy Andrews by asking, "What time do you turn off the oven?" The reply was the same, "Yes, please."

Proper clothing is a "must" in the tropics. We had sent our trunks months before we arrived in Ghana, but to our disappointment, there was a custom's strike in Takoradi and our trunks were still 150 miles away. We rented bedding, cutlery, and dishes from the university. Clothing was something else. I cut the legs and sleeves off the children's pajamas and washed their playclothes every day. Janice and I had one cotton skirt and blouse apiece. We called them our uniforms. My husband was a sly one and had carried enough summer things all through Europe to do him. I refused to pay the high prices for more summer clothes, so it was like Christmas the day our trunks finally arrived. Even old clothes had acquired charm and beauty.

Old-timers say if the newcomer doesn't get sick the first two weeks that he is in West Africa, he is immune to the water, germs, and new food. On our tenth day in Ghana, Janice came down with African stomach "palaver." She knew this was the end, and at times did not care. She ran a high temperature, had vomiting and diarrhea, and perspired profusely. The college doctor came every day. He was cool, calm, and collected. I distinctly was not. Win and I would be up once an hour all night fixing glucose and water, since Janice was dehydrated, giving medicine, and putting cold packs on her head when we weren't mopping up the floor. After five days, she quickly recovered and her first comment on getting out of bed was, "I've lost weight. How wonderful!" I muttered darkly about nineteen-year-olds as I staggered off to rest. Fortunately, none of the rest of us were ill a day.

Eventually we began to catch on, settle down, and feel at home. I asked friends who had lived in Ghana what they did—how they spent their days—and they seemed to me to be pur-

posefully vague. Now I began to understand. Everything takes more time and energy. People drop in. At home, they call first to see if it is convenient. In Ghana, if they have driven ninety miles to visit, they are welcome whether it is convenient or not. Another can of something is opened without apologies.

Friends and neighbors drop in constantly for coffee, a squash or tea, and conversation. There is no television, the nearest movie to the university is eight miles away, and the radio is not especially entertaining, so people read more, and it becomes increasingly easy to take a siesta every afternoon. Though feeling that nothing has been accomplished, by 9 P.M. one is exhausted. Schedules are suddenly not as important as they were. There is a vague feeling that the body is being tried by the tropical heat, and that one must adjust and not fight it.

## CHAPTER III

### Downtown to Accra

ACCRA, THE CAPITAL of Ghana, is a city of contrasts. It is on the seacoast, but has no real harbor. It has large department stores, but outside their doors by the open drain is the improvised counter, soap box, rough table or bucket displaying penny goods, cigarettes, and small-portion groceries. Beside it squats the vendor, usually a woman, her babies suckling or sleeping, while her other small children play at her feet.

In Accra, there are the soft-spoken, friendly Ghanaian, but also the Yorubas, Hausas, and Ibos from Nigeria, British government workers, missionaries of many sects, Western-educated Africans, politicians, and a confusion of Syrian, Lebanese, Indian, Greek, Italian, Swiss, German, and American "commercial."

Accra, a city of 200,000, lies 5½ degrees above the equator. It is humid the year around except during the harmattan season—only the sea breeze makes it livable. Over half of the population in Accra is from the Ga-speaking tribe.

It is a colorful city. Many of the men wear the rich bright handwoven *kente* cloth and the loose smocks or Roman-like togas, and a majority of the women dress in gayly printed mammy cloth. The large prints may be of leopards, giraffs, flowers, the flag of Ghana, or face of Queen Elizabeth II. Ghanaians love bright colors; orange, gold, yellow, red, and purple are the favorites.

Accra abounds with native dressmakers, and they do a lucrative business; yet Norman Hartnell, dressmaker to the Queen of England, flew a collection of his clothes to Accra and held a most successful fashion show with African models at the leading hotel just before Christmas.

In Accra every extreme flourishes. The juju man and a qualified doctor may live on the same street with equal prosperity. The squalor of slums where thousands of people per square mile inhabit a shackland with indescribable smells, dust, and open drains may be right around the corner from important business houses with high ceilings, air conditioning, and the latest business machines registering imports and exports. Under the shining Coca-Cola and petrol signs will be the inevitable chickens, stray goats, and sheep. The goats and sheep in Ghana are not like those in the States. These resemble a small, smooth-haired dog, skinny and fleet of foot. One will see the young Ghanaian women in Western dresses with hair plaited in short, pert pigtails and young men in pastel shirts of transparent nylon; but the poorest pedestrians will still be barefoot, their soles toughened to leathery hardness.

Accra is the capital of a black society. There are no white settlers as in the Congo, Union of South Africa, and other parts of Africa. Whites cannot own land. This is the African's country and you are his guest. There is no feeling of hostility or uneasiness. We never locked our house nor worried when we left the children alone. There is no color bar in hotels, night clubs, or cinemas. I have often been the only white person in Y.M.C.A. lectures, classes, and social groups and I was always greeted and made to feel welcome. The Ghanaian has genuine warmth and courtesy. If you stumble in the street or accidentally bump into anything, strangers will quickly take notice and say sincerely, "Sorry, sorry." You feel they mean it. They have, I think, a real courtesy of the heart.

Smartly uniformed policemen direct traffic efficiently at all main intersections. They do their job with courtesy and a sense of humor. The first week in Accra, I was trying to master the gear shift and remember to drive on the left-hand side of the road. I came up to the roundabout and the impressive uniformed policeman. I wanted to turn right and instead of keeping left around the roundabout, I sharply turned right just as I'd do in the States and passed in front of him. Horrified, and too

late, I saw my mistake. He simply put both hands over his face, shook his head, and smilingly motioned me on.

Accra had no traffic lights until their independence. One patriotic Ghanaian, admiring a newly installed set of lights at an intersection, was heard to remark, "Isn't it lovely that they chose the same colors for the traffic lights as our flag: green, gold, and red?"

In addition to the three modern department stores, there are streets of shops of all kinds and descriptions. In some the walls are hung with shirts and shorts made on the premises, and imported miscellany of all kinds spill over counters and floor-plastics, fountain pens, jewelry, crockery, carryalls, and rain-coats. Some are bazaars with bales of yard goods of every conceivable weave, pattern, and color. Dainty fabrics spill out of these dim bazaars in ethereal voiles, nylon, velvets, gauzy, chiffons, batiste, and imitation lace. Some shopkeepers have most of their wares displayed on the ground in front of their shops. Many of these shops are not wired for electricity and still use kerosene lanterns for light. There are two hundred registered goldsmiths in Accra. Their gold jewelry is so pure it has little appeal to Western women as it is a red gold and is not especially becoming on white skin. It is more attractive against a dark skin.

Then there are the native markets. Here are wax prints, hundreds of bolts of the gayest of mammy cloths. There are beads, books, vegetables, fruits, groundnuts, palm oil, fish, fresh meat, polka-dotted hardware, nylon dusters—merchandise of every description. The market "mammies" run these stalls. All adult women are called "mammies" and they dominate the trade in Ghana. From a thousand stands these women carry on their business in the market place, bazaar, and in the street. They are talkative, gay, vigorous, and robust, with big, protruding bellies (this is something adds to the attractions of a woman here). They often have good earnings so that they can afford to send their children to private secondary schools. Many of them live on their own or with their children, mother, sisters, and sis-

ters' children, while the husbands, who frequently have several wives, live by themselves, one wife at a time sharing the household. The women and children belong to her family. After a wife has had a child it is the custom for her to go to her family for two years until the child is weaned. She cannot take a chance of getting pregnant until the child is weaned, for it would surely die. That was one of the reasons, naturally, why a man has several wives. What use was a wife to a husband shortly after she had had a baby! Under the "extended family system" in the matrilineal society the brother is responsible for his sister and her children. While the younger people with steady jobs complain about relatives moving in with them, it is a tradition difficult to break. It is actually a system of social security. Each family is expected to take care of its own.

The market place always abounds with small children and noise. Those who can afford the three dollars a month may send their children who are old enough to a nursery school near the market, which is run for the mammies' children. The babies are always tied on their mother's back with the sling of her skirt-wrap. They seem so much a part of the women, and of their dress, that mother and child lose their separate identities. You grow accustomed to seeing a small head peering from the drapery folds. Despite closely confined limbs and being held in one position, the babies scarcely ever cry. There is their mother's warmth and motion, and as one African mammy said, "Their bellies get plenty of chop anytime." "Chop" is the African word for any kind of food. They cook chop, buy chop, serve chop. Chop is a word used as loosely as "dash." One cook-steward sadly wrote his employer-family, who are good friend of ours, that during the summer he had been forced to chop his bicycle. They immediately understood that he hadn't hacked it into pieces but had been forced to sell it to buy food. So chop to the West African means food in any sense of the word.

Behind the stands in the native markets, the mammies cook chop, feed and bathe their children while carrying on their business. Maybe they cannot read or write, but believe me,

they can count and add up. They are shrewd and industrious and have an important standing in the country. Women play so great a role in Ghana that no reform can be carried on without them.

The mammies, with their babies on their backs, their loads of yams, plantains, baskets of oranges, or other paraphernalia for street-trading balanced steadily on their heads, are a familiar sight on every street. The shape of the object, size or weight has nothing to do with the things carried on the head. You may see a woman with a water can or a load of five-foot-long firewood balanced on her head, or it may be a small school boy with a bottle of ink on his head as he walks to class.

One of the gratifying surprises to the Westerner in Accra is the big Kingsway department store on Kwame Nkrumah Avenue. It was opened only two years ago at the time of the independence celebrations. It is more than a store; it is already an institution. Majestically it rises from the avenue like a temple, four stories high with a parking lot and window displays that would not be out of place on State Street. Here friends meet in the cafeteria or coke bar, visit the beauty shop, look hungrily in the magazine and book section for airmail editions of *Time* and *Newsweek*. Occasionally a *Saturday Evening Post* (rarely over a month old) could be found bringing the United States vividly to tropical verandas and siesta time bedrooms. No one knows the excitement and joy of getting American magazines until he is 7,500 miles away. For a short while you feel in touch and caught up in the momentum of life at home; then before you know it, you have read it all. It is a temptation to devour new magazines in a single evening and have to endure a famine until the next lot comes.

Even on ordinary days, the Kingsway is crowded with a heterogeneous variety of shoppers. Along the counters, prominent African *hausfraus* with large shopping baskets rub elbows with Accra's white wives. Missionaries, with long lists, from up country, wives from remote agriculture stations, bachelors from secondary schools—all are replenishing their larders for



another month. Visitors to town always carry long lists, their own and their neighbors. There are no evening shopping hours or corner grocery stores. All stores are closed from twelve until two, so one learns quickly to shop early. When I was new and green, I would just be getting my shopping underway by twelve o'clock, and the stores would all close down. That meant another eight-mile trip back to town.

Within the store one could almost forget the hot, steamy West Africa outdoors. Here are high ceilings, whirring fans, tiled floors, the click of the supermarket's turnstiles, tinkle of cash registers, and soft African voices buying and selling. And the Kingsway boasted the only escalator in Accra. It was such an attraction when it was first installed that many came in not to buy but just to ride on the "modern miracle."

The cold store is air-conditioned. Here one could buy frozen turkeys and Armour Star Weiners from the States, chickens from the Union of South Africa and bacon from Denmark. Meat is prepackaged—something that is rarely seen in England or on the Continent. The Kingsway, which is a part of the great United Africa Company owned by Unilever in England, modeled its supermarket and cold store after the supermarkets in the United States. The whole store confirms the city's keen interest in the newest goods and methods from Western production lines. Fresh eggs could be had for a price of one dollar and twenty cents a dozen. In the fruit and vegetable bins, fresh coconuts are a nickel, pineapples a quarter, bananas a penny a pound, oranges a penny apiece, but fresh carrots, cabbage, celery, and apples are all imported and are really luxury foods. These prices made the shopper realize anew that she was in the tropics.

The Kingsway is the only store in Accra to offer installment buying. Here the householder can buy a refrigerator, radio, or washer and enjoy it as he pays for it. Charge accounts are also very popular. The doubtful blessing of Western ways is becoming very popular even in blackest Africa. At the end of the month when the statements arrived, many husbands wished

their jobs were up in the bush far from the temptation of the supermarket.

The European experts worked hard at streamlining the merchandise, gearing their machineries to a faster pace and attempting to introduce a modern sales psychology. Sometimes their success shone like a beacon over departments which worked with smooth precision; other times the new regime creaked and showed signs of strain when human nature refused to co-operate in this new show of efficiency. When trusted supervisors collaborated with a customer, probably a relative, in carrying off valuable merchandise, when the salespeople mysteriously took sick on "busy" days, and when salespeople from different tribes refused to work together in the same departments, the managers thought longingly of going home on leave—the sooner the better. I had great sympathy for this pioneering store. I did sales-training for them at intervals for a year's period. Mr. Labi, their African sales-training director, was a stoic and phlegmatically kept plugging at basic sales-training day after day.

I had had long experience in training sales people in the States and teaching salesmanship in the university. I had even written a successful book on sales-training. So I came with determination and enthusiasm to give them a new sales philosophy. It was just what one general manager, Mr. Bethell, wanted to accomplish, and he wished me luck. I soon found out, "If the customer handles the merchandise, she'll soil it; if you give her refunds or credit, she'll take advantage of you; if you offer to order it, she won't buy what you have; if you encourage charge accounts, she won't spend her cash; if you listen to her and her problems, she'll waste your time." Of course they were right in every instance and they almost convinced me that maybe Marshall Field and his, "Give the lady what she wants," and Sears Roebuck with their, "Satisfaction guaranteed or your money back," were just asking for trouble. But I tried—how I tried—to convince them that the customer was always right. When I patiently and firmly explained how

we cater to the customer's wishes in the United States, they looked pityingly at me.

I went in with a firm resolve and high hopes to break them of saying, "Yes, please," and "No, please." If you ask them if something is in stock, you invariably get, "No, please." When it was explained to me this was their way of being polite and gracious and the "please" added on was to soften the blow of having to say "no," I gave up. Before the year was over I found to my astonishment that I was saying, "No, please."

Another expression in West Africa that always frustrated European shoppers beyond endurance was the salesperson saying three simple words, "It is finished." Those three words slowed your days and tested your temper. If asked, "When will you get some more?" they'd reply simply, "I cannot know. It is finished." You'd be frantic wondering if they meant for a week, a month or forever.

In the heat of the day, I forced my long-suffering husband to drive me to five shops looking for typewriting paper. There was none to be found. I told him in desperation that I doubted that I would ever find any typewriting paper. He said maddeningly, "You must keep calm. Didn't they say it was finished?" So when I started sales-training, my secret goal was to be calm, insidious, and clever and break them of saying, "It is finished."

I explained all the alternatives to a sales class and suggested that they say, "It is temporarily out of stock, will you check again next week? We expect a shipment soon." I then asked them if they didn't think those phrases sounded better. There was a long pregnant silence, then one hand went up, "But, Mrs. Cone, if you don't have any, it *is* finished." I silently acknowledged defeat and went on to the next stage of the sale. I confess I'm not above saying smugly to the family when they've eaten the last crumb of something and want more, "It is finished."

The African salespeople take their jobs very seriously. Being a salesperson carries both prestige and a better salary than most any other. They regard it as a career with status more than

do salespeople in the States. You can advance up the scale from trainee, assistant salesperson, head salesperson, supervisor, to manager. They were proud of their freshly starched pastel uniforms that the store furnished and of the various store benefits—as recreation and lunch room, store nurse, welfare lady, and a regular pay check. The African salesperson is patient, unfailingly polite, friendly, and he tries hard to please.

They lose their sense of humor and are terribly sensitive if they are called “silly” or “stupid.” Those two words are anathema to them. It ruins their efficiency for the morning if they are called stupid. We were working very diligently on suggestion selling in the store at one period. A very bright salesgirl reported that when she had sold a tube of tooth paste that morning she had suggested a special that they had on tooth brushes. The customer looked at her icily and said haughtily, “Of course not, what a stupid thing to say.” It was not at all stupid, but logical, and the girl was crushed. We told her a fitting comeback would have been, “Oh, I beg your pardon, but I thought you had teeth.” This cheered her enormously and all of us in the sales class had a good laugh. How I wished I could have had classes for the customers!

If some of the so-called European ladies could have seen themselves from the other side of the counter they would not have been so smug. The salespeople actually hid when they saw certain battleaxes bearing down on them in the dress department. The hapless overworked European manager had to serve them herself. Of course, when you knew the salespeople, you understood that they had their own way of sizing up a customer. If they liked and respected you, they could not do enough for “Madame.” If they said, “Has the ‘lady’ been served?” beware, for by calling you a lady, they didn’t feel that you were a lady at all. It was used in a derogatory way.

Their wages of thirty-five dollars a month for a salesperson to sixty dollars a month for a supervisor are low by our standards, but very good in Ghana where the national income averages one hundred seventy-five dollars a year.

Before I leave the department store, I must mention the necessity of learning a new vocabulary in order to shop. I have threatened to make up a list of words and leave it for the American Embassy to give out to all new innocent Americans who arrive in Accra. I could never find baking soda in the supermarket. After several weeks, I finally asked a clerk where I would find it. After much explaining, the light dawned and she said, "Oh, you mean bicarbonate of soda—you find that at the chemists." I did know by then that the chemists is the drug-store. Waxpaper is "grease proof paper"; granulated sugar is castor sugar; corn starch is corn flour; cookies are biscuits; jello is jelly, and so on.

Downtown Accra has eighteen cinemas. They show mostly American movies, and unfortunately, grade B ones at that. However, it is a very pleasant experience to go to the cinema, as part of the seats are always out from under the balcony in the open air. It is cooler there and you can see the moon and the stars. The cinemas show two features. At the end of the first one, the house is emptied after the Ghana National Anthem is played and if you want to see the second feature, you come back in and pay again. The first half hour are advertisements, mostly singing ones, on everything from laxatives to banking. They are amusing the first time, but after that you'll find yourself singing for days the little ditty that starts, "She banks her money in the B.W.A. (Bank of West Africa)."

Night clubs with foreign-sounding names like "Week End in Colorado," "Week End in Havana," "Seaview," and "Lido" are quite popular. "High life" is the favorite music and the dance "high life" is a shuffling two-step completely suited to the tropics. You can do it all evening and still have energy left.

It was not exactly easy to "eat out" in Accra. There were no restaurants. The few hotels had dining rooms where you could eat with assurance. The Kingsway store had a cafeteria for sandwiches, drinks, and cakes, but, of course, this was open only during store hours. The Y.M.C.A. served drinks and snacks. The local "chop bars" served the Ghanaians, not the Europeans,

as they serve the native food of yam, plantain, *kenkey*, *fufu*, and cassava.

One evening when I was tired of my own cooking and complained that everything tasted the same, Win took me to the swank Ambassador Hotel for dinner. There was a breeze on the candlelit terrace, but the menu was disappointing. When our ordinary meal of creamed chicken and canned peas was brought, I was astonished to see the couple at the next table being served a thick steak from a charcoal-broiling cart. Baffled and outraged, we called the headwaiter and told him we saw nothing like that on the menu. Unperturbed, he smiled and said, "Of course it isn't on the menu." He added we could ask for it the next time.

Another evening, we drove to the Lisbon Hotel terrace and were having a cool drink, when I noticed a cart on the edge of the terrace with a huge sign, "Hot dogs, two shillings or 28¢ each." The young African, in a white coat and cap, was doing a rushing business. Drooling in anticipation, I ordered a hot dog. I decided our ideas weren't the same as I bit into a tasteless sausage.

The food stores were closed from Saturday noon until Monday morning. If you ran out, you either did without, or borrowed from your next-door neighbor.

## CHAPTER IV

### Chop Every Day

PREPARATION OF FOOD in the tropics is at best a tricky and debatable matter. In a climate where every form of bacteria thrives in the moist heat, decay follows fast on ripeness and any food left uncovered or fly-visited may gravely endanger the family's health. One of the first sights you become accustomed to is the top of the refrigerator filled with bottles of boiled water instead of the usual bottles of milk. Every house on the college compound is equipped with a tall crockery water filter as a matter of course, and all drinking water is boiled and filtered. It can be time-consuming just keeping enough water boiled and cooled, for you drink more water in a hot country. Steward Andrews thought it was a lot of work for nothing, and when I found he was boiling the water only three minutes, I took over and timed it to at least ten minutes.

His ideas and mine clashed many times. One of the best examples of our world-apart thinking was the day I discovered him scrubbing the kitchen floor with the same sponge as he used on the dishes. I am convinced he never understood what all the shouting was about. He promised faithfully never to do it again, but I am sure mainly because he didn't want to upset Madame and have big palaver.

There is an off-beat flavor which pervades every meal. African-produced vegetables, meat, fish, and eggs are permeated with this "tropical flavor" or perhaps it's the constant 85° temperature and 85° humidity that make it impossible for anything to come to the table with a crisp look or taste. Any raw vegetable, as lettuce, tomatoes, or carrots, had to be soaked in a

chlorine solution called Milton. Dettol, a disinfectant to put in the dish water, and Milton are two necessities on the kitchen shelf in West Africa.

The white man's taste and foods do not appeal to the cook-steward's own palate. He loves spicy dishes, hot with chili peppers or heavy with curry. He likes all kinds of stews rich with palm oil or groundnut oil served with yam, plantain, or cassava.

One West African dish that Madame let the cook have complete charge of was "country-chop" or groundnut stew. Here she could teach him nothing. This dish has become a part of tropical life and is served at least once a week. In fact, it was served the first three times we were invited out to dinner in Accra.

Groundnut stew is made basically with chicken. It swims in rich, pungent juices with plenty of palm oil and is served with a heaping platter of rice. Around this impressive dish are little side dishes of chopped onion, pineapple, grapefruit, orange, tangerine, shredded fresh coconut, red and green peppers, chutney, bananas (both raw and cooked), groundnuts (whole and crushed), powdered ginger, and chopped boiled egg. One night I counted fifteen side dish accompaniments to the groundnut stew!

Here is a favorite recipe of groundnut stew from a Ghanaian cookbook.

#### G R O U N D N U T   S T E W

3 cigarette tins groundnuts	1 teas. pepper
6 smoked fish	2 teas. salt
4 tomatoes	$\frac{1}{2}$ lb. meat
6 onions	3 pints cold water
6 okras	6 hard boiled eggs
6 garden eggs	2 tab. groundnut or palm oil

1. Prepare and cut meat, onions, and tomatoes and divide fish into small pieces. Fry in hot oil.
2. Prepare rest of vegetables and add water.
3. Shell eggs and put in stew which should be thick.
5. Serve hot with *banku*, *ampesi*, or *kenkey*.



Measurements were invariably given in cigarette tins which dismayed and stopped me, as I had none. I would never venture forth to live in a foreign country again without including an American cookbook. Such a little thing, but I was lost without it. There were plenty of English cookbooks in the shops and libraries but all measurements are given in ounces and pounds which meant buying a scale. One day I made a dish of jelly (jello) according to instructions on the package and it never hardened. I had used an English pint measure and too much water. It was frustrating trying to cook even the simple dishes. Here is a suggested Ghanaian menu for the week:

	<i>Breakfast</i>	<i>Midday</i>	<i>Afternoon</i>	<i>Evening</i>
Mon.	Rice and Beans	Boiled cassava and palm nut soup	Fresh raw fruit	Corn soup
Tues.	Corn meal and porridge	Kenkey and bean stew	"	Fufu and garde egg soup
Wed.	Corn porridge	Groundnut soup	"	Corn and fried fish
Thurs.	Corn porridge	Cassava and bean soup	"	Plain soup
Fri.	Corn beans	Kenkey and palm nut soup	"	Cassava and gar den egg soup
Sat.	Yam porridge	Kenkey and bean stew	"	Boiled cassava dough and okr: soup
Sun.	Corn porridge	Groundnut stew	"	Kenkey and garden egg stev

Most stewards know twelve different ways of folding dinner napkins. The first time I saw the stiff white damask napkin, intricately folded, standing bold upright in the water glass with a bright-red sprig of flowers stuck in the top, I thought I was imagining things. It really was a work of art, and I admired it accordingly. We spent a week end in Kumasi with our friends the Duncansons, who had a steward with real artistic flair.

The napkins were folded in a different way for every meal we had.

One of the most disheartening battles waged in the kitchen was against ants. They were formidable. They invaded every corner and crevice. When a box of cookies was opened, the children were encouraged to eat them all, for the ants found them even in tins or the humidity made them limp within an hour. We had the usual screened larder-cupboard with the legs set in kerosene-tainted water, but our ants still found their way in. Weevils in the flour was another nuisance. Flour was suspect if it had stayed too long on the store shelf, and the weevil larvae had gotten a good start. Steward thought baking would take care of that, so why not overlook a weevil or two. I never learned to share this nonchalant attitude and sifted all the flour myself.

For each meal, milk was made from powdered milk, or cans of evaporated milk were opened. Cream could also be had in tins. You soon learn to take your coffee black. Local fresh vegetables and fruits were not usually bought in the stores, but from the market mammies at outdoor stalls. I went to Comfort, a typical fat, jolly, generous, mammy who saved me anything unusual. From her I bought grapefruit, oranges, lemons, limes, coconuts, egg plant, pawpaws, and avocados. During certain seasons she might have green beans, carrots, and little tomatoes. These were very expensive and had little flavor. She always dashed me with a bunch of bananas (the whole bunch probably cost three cents) for coming to her. The Kingsway carried the imported fresh fruits and vegetables like apples, cabbage, turnips, and potatoes. Once for a long period, all the stores were out of potatoes. Then one day there was a big sign outside the cold store at Kingsway: "The Potato Boat Has Arrived." I hurried happily in to buy a precious bag and not until later did I realize how different this was from my past thinking. Potatoes at home are so plentiful that the surplus is an embarrassment to Congress.

All of our packaged mixes that we rely so heavily upon—

pie crust mix, cake mixes, pudding mixes, pancake mixes—are nearly nonexistent. One store did get some cake mixes in, and they were snapped up immediately. I remarked crossly to my husband that no doubt the American wives had bought them up. You soon learn to shop differently. When something comes in, as canned corn, pop corn, tomato juice, pie cherries, or applesauce, you never buy one or two cans but a dozen, for you may not see any on the shelves again for six months.

If you live on a Western diet as most Europeans do in Accra, you eat imported food, and it is expensive. We figured that food in Accra cost us about the same as in Chicago, and we did not eat as well. We gave the children vitamin tablets and we all took Vitamin C or ascorbic-acid tablets daily. A dentist in Accra told us that most people in Ghana suffer from gum and teeth trouble due to lack of Vitamin C. And this in a country that grows citrus fruits! Due to the soil a glass of fresh orange juice has less of Vitamin C here than it would at home. Then, the steward will squeeze the juice the night before for the next morning's breakfast or make the noon meal's fruit salad right after breakfast if you don't keep a sharp eye on him.

Our Sunday breakfast table was never complete without the two white Aralan tablets beside each water glass as a chastening reminder of the malarial mosquito's existence. Few people escape an occasional visitation of fever. The symptoms are a headache, languor, slight fever, and aches in all parts of the old chassis. The patient lying in bed, aching and sweating, is apt to curse the anopheles mosquito for this tropical misery. The Europeans who have malaria here are the ones who get careless and do not take their Aralan, Paludrine, Mepacrine, or whatever medicine they have chosen for a suppressent. Andrews dragged around for weeks complaining of his health until I sent him to the university clinic. The doctor promptly diagnosed it as malaria and sent him to his uncle's house for a week.

Coca-Cola and Pepsi-Cola have invaded Accra and have built large, impressive bottling works, but due to long indoc-

trination by the British, squash is the popular drink. Squash is a bottled syrup in lime, lemon, or orange flavors to which you add cool water to get the desired strength. Only Americans add ice. Squash is served as an afternoon drink at parties, and children take it to school in bottles for their midmorning drink, because it is not safe to drink tap water. Most Americans have never heard of squash until they land in West Africa—then it becomes a habit.

Never have I lived in a house where things fell apart so frequently. The handles literally fell off the refrigerator and oven doors, the screws were lost from the ironing board, and Andrews dropped a new electric iron. The tops of peanut butter, jelly, and pickle jars mysteriously disappeared never to be seen again. When Steward had broken two sets of water glasses in six months and had "borrowed" several cups and dishes for his own quarters, I was forced to greater vigilance in kitchen affairs.

The popular notion that life in the tropics is a simple luxurious business in which a procession of servants wait upon your every whim, is far from exact. Human labor can be bought cheaply, but in hiring it, you also take on their problems and woes and relatives. Andrews put me on the defensive the first day, when I was new and green. He said, "I must leave the house at 8:15 on Sundays to catch the bus to go to church. I am good Catholic."

I weakly said, "Every Sunday?"

Looking at me as if I were a heathen, he answered in horrified tones, "Madame wouldn't keep me from going to church, would she?"

No, Madame wouldn't, so on Sunday mornings I did the breakfast dishes, peeled potatoes, and worked on the dinner. No one could say I ever held back organized religion.

A few things disappeared, and when we in a roundabout way asked if Andrews had seen any strangers around, he indignantly said, "I would never have taken them, I am good

Christian, just ask my priest." I confess I never wanted to push it that far. I accepted his word.

Quite often he was late getting back and had such wonderful excuses that I was always curious to see what he would come up with. His uncle was ill, another uncle had died, he was bidding his cousin good-bye who was leaving Ghana, his watch (the one we gave him for Christmas) stopped, he missed the bus, the bus broke down, or his brothers dropped in at his uncle's house just as he was leaving. It was always plausible enough that you felt like a cad to object. It could have been true.

Andrews came to us just before Christmas and wanted to borrow £8, or about \$23.00. We were surprised and told him as he only made £7, or about \$20.00 a month that it was not wise for him to borrow that much. We would advance him £3, or \$8.40. He was crestfallen and sulked for several days. But he took the money right before Christmas and went shopping, armed with a duffel bag that he borrowed from us. He came back resplendent with new sandals, slacks, and shirt. We surmised correctly that Andrews had a lady friend. She came around each morning with a huge tray of African food balanced delicately on her head. This she sold to gardeners, stewards, and construction workers for breakfast. Andrews' work suffered in the following weeks. He spent so much time waiting for her and then laughing and talking that I had to remind him that the dishes were still undone. He devoted so much time to washing and pressing his clothes that the house began to look something less than shipshape. I kept hoping she would find a new territory to work. But Andrews' good manners never failed him. He always said, "Good morning, Madame," and if we'd been away on trek, he was always at the door beaming when we returned saying, "Welcome home, Madame."

Once, when he was late for the fifth time, I tried to fire him. I said, "Andrews, you can go back to your uncle's house tomorrow morning right after breakfast, I have had enough."

He was up bright and early the next morning getting breakfast. Afterwards, he took out the cleaning equipment and started dusting. I said, "Andrews, I told you last night you were to go this morning."

He looked at me calmly and said, "Patience Madame, I shall do better." He did too, for a week, and I gave up. How can you fire someone who will not leave? It was too hot to try to figure that one out.

## CHAPTER V

### The Little Joys of Life

ON ONE SWELTERING MORNING as I returned from shopping, with my clothes clinging damply to me, I crossly remarked, "A whole morning gone and nothing to show for it."

My husband, who has a dry sense of humor, remarked, "Why, dear, count yourself lucky to be a white woman in the tropics, living a life of leisure."

"I'm the cook for five hungry people plus an extra child or two and a few guests who drop in," I pointed out. "Not *just* a woman in the tropics."

That morning I had been to all the stores looking for potatoes, black pepper, dill pickles, peanut butter, and brown sugar. I spent the morning discovering, "It is finished." So was I. Just trying to shop for ordinary things was time-consuming, frustrating, and exhausting. The shops were far apart, and on some days the heat wilted frocks and spirits within the hour. On those days there was nothing but to accept defeat, tear up the shopping list which had been methodically made up, and revise the menu.

After being used to shopping centers two blocks away and evening shopping hours, it required much adjustment to drive ten miles and search frantically for nonexistent merchandise and be out of the store by the time it closed at twelve o'clock sharp. Going into Accra meant giving up the whole morning whether you wanted one item or twenty. I was hesitant about complaining, for Win always kindly but firmly reminded me that while I drove ten miles, many people had to drive one hun-

dred miles to Accra to shop. This was supposed to raise my morale.

The Hausa trader usually called once a month and this visit was time-consuming. This tall, white-robed figure would be followed by his boy carrying on his head the handmade wares wrapped in a rug. The boy would sit outside. The trader would remove his sandals from his dusty feet, bow, smile, and seat himself in the middle of the floor. Dramatically he would spread the carved ebony heads and bookends, ivory jewelry, and hand woven rugs around him and wait for your approval. He always remembered what you had bought the last time and brought something different. He was a great actor, and haggling over the final price was part of the act. Finally I would say, "This is my last offer." He would sit silently for a few minutes and then say sadly, "I'll take it."

Harmattan time usually begins in December, and for a few weeks a cool, dry wind blows from the desert region north. During this period the sky ceases to glare. Through a gentle haze the sun is an orange ball at which one may look without blinking. The air is full of particles of dust which settle on everything, and the furniture cracks. Our dresser top actually buckled. For a few of the worst days, lips crack and eyes feel dry and burning. After the break of the harmattan, the dry season continues its motionless unrelenting heat day after day.

Market vegetables diminished to a few small heads of cauliflower and withered green onions. Small heads of cauliflower cost two shillings or twenty-eight cents each. Our lawn became brown and parched, the lovely bed of marigolds dried up and died. The gardeners could not water anything, for Accra had its worst water shortage in ten years.

At the university, one fared better than the townspeople. We, at least, were allowed one tankful of water a day. Some of our friends at the embassy in Accra had to get along with a few buckets of water a day. We got the last bit of use out of every drop. Water left from the laundry was saved to scrub floors and flush toilets. The three children and I all took a bath

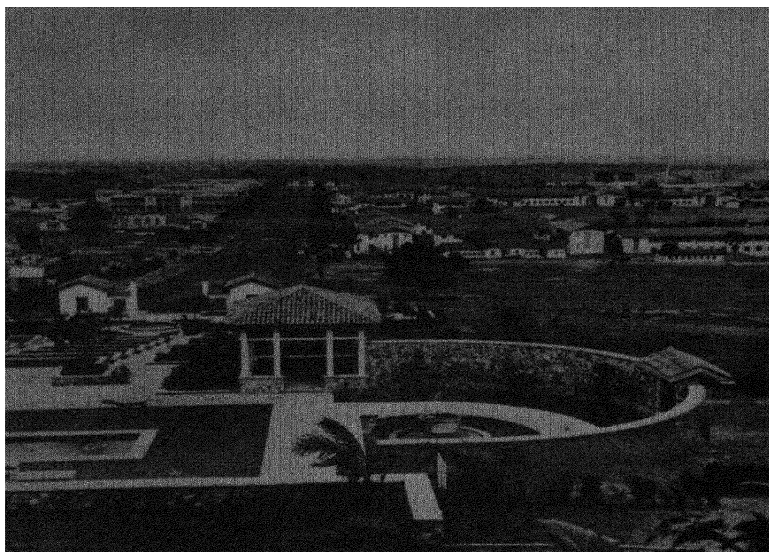




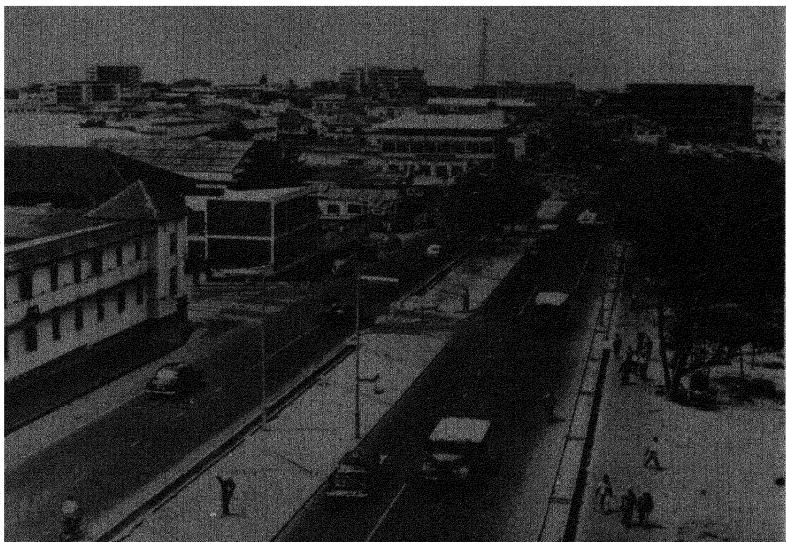
**The Cones in Indiana**



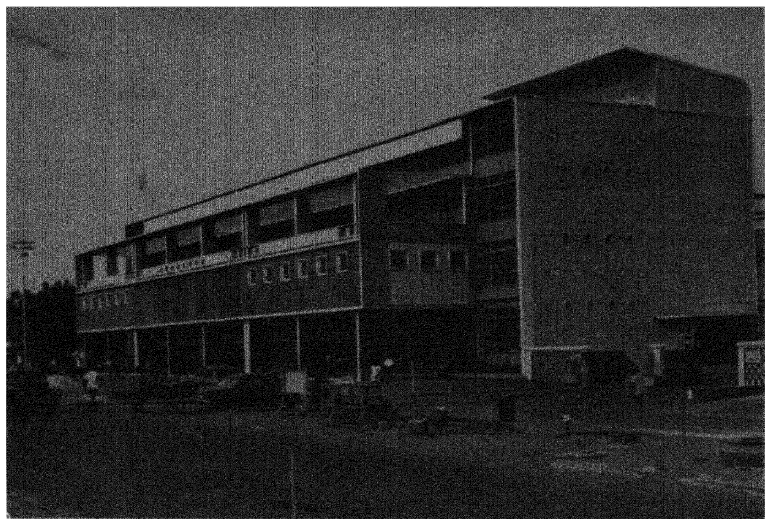
**Ghana Airways Plane Ready for Take-off at Ghana Airport**



View of Entire University College of Ghana



Aerial View of Downtown Accra



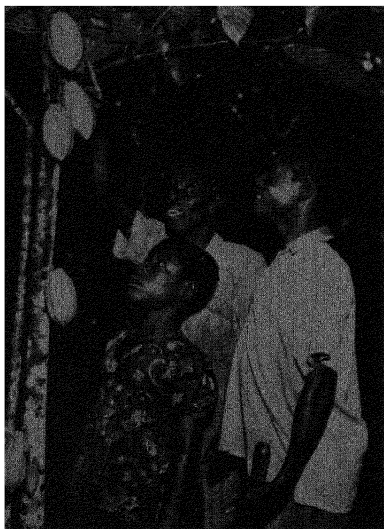
**The New, Modern Kingsway Department Store**



**State Durbar Celebration in Full Swing**



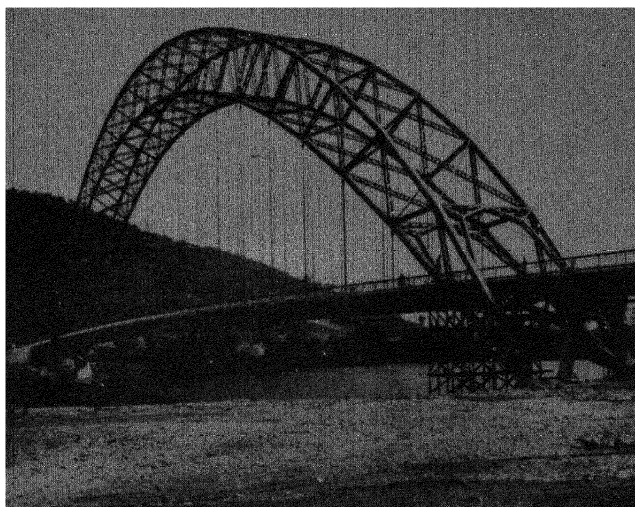
The Lovely Miss Ghana



Ghanaians Picking Cocoa Seedlings



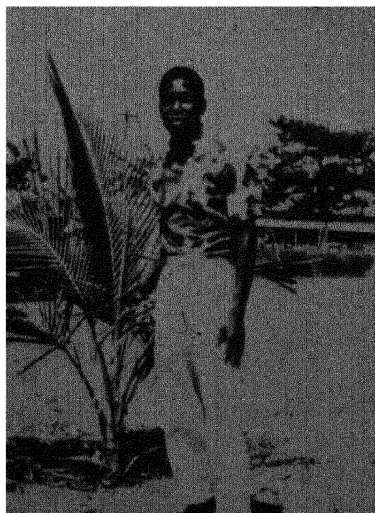
The Author in Her Tropical Back Yard



The Unusual Volta River Bridge



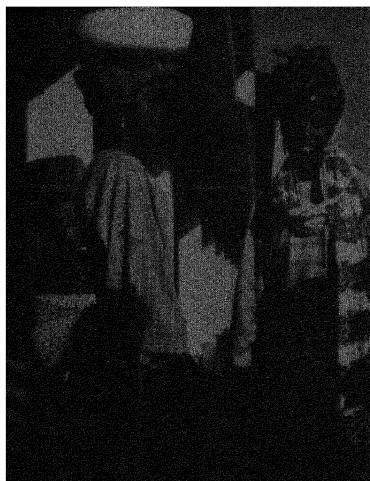
Henrietta and George Cone, Children of  
the Author, in Ghanaian Dress



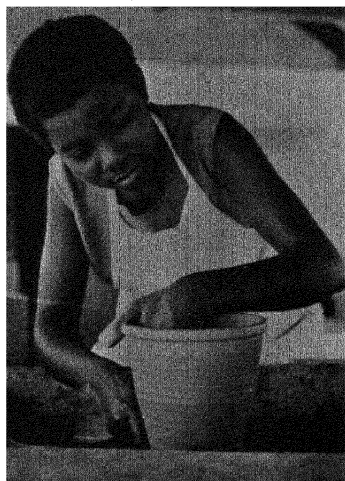
The Cones' Steward, Andrews



Freedom Arch in Accra, Symbolizing the Infant Republic

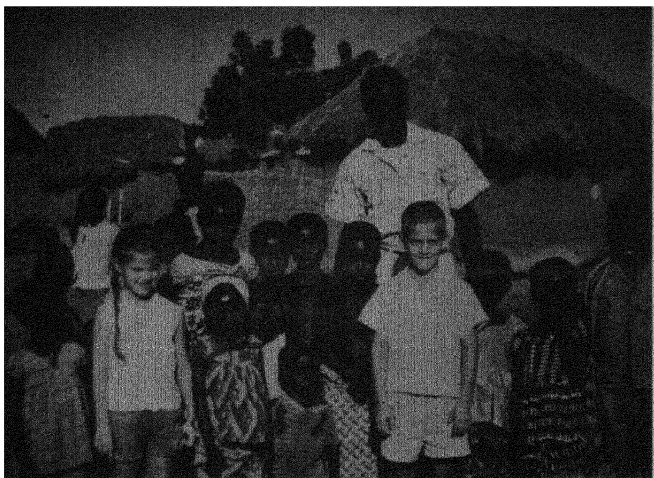


A Nigerian Mammy With Her Child

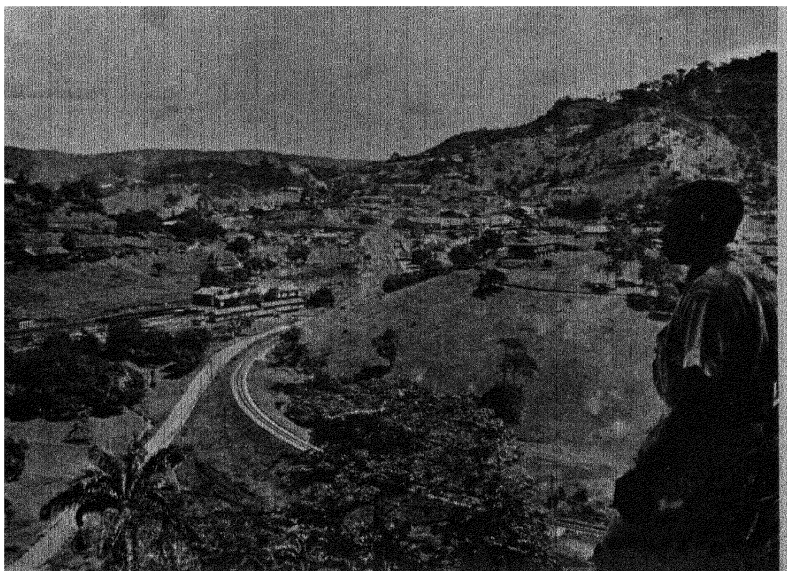


Making Pottery in the Age-old  
Fashion

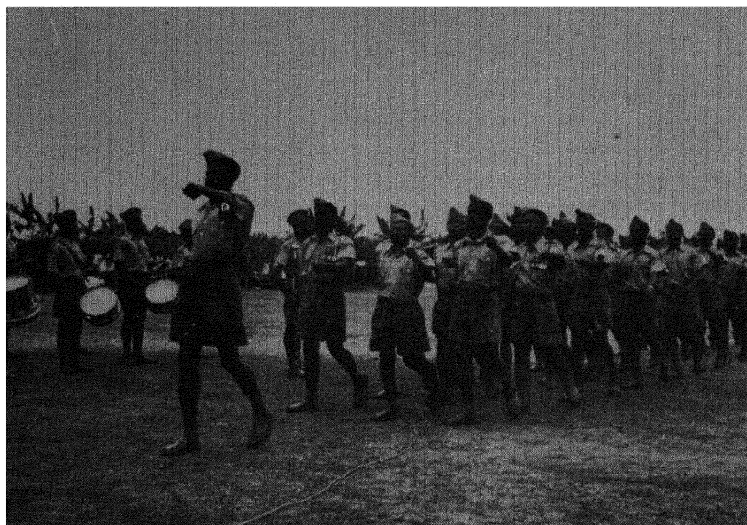




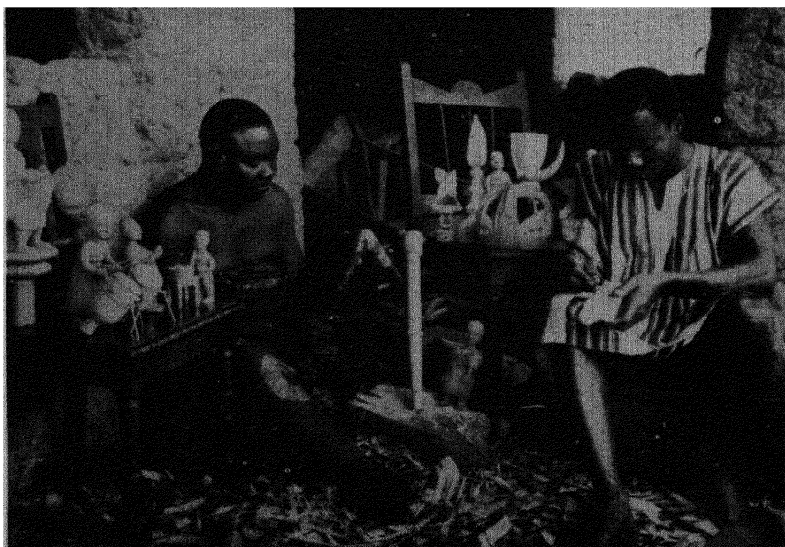
Cleophas With Children in Christian Village



View of a Mining Town in Ghana



**Builders' Brigade on the March**



**Ghanaian Woodcarvers Practicing Their Painstaking Art**



in the same water. By the time my turn came, I confess it was a deep pink color from scrubbing the red soil off them. We boiled drinking water ten minutes longer. Accra was fortunate that no epidemic broke out.

It continued hot, hot, hot, right through February, March, and April. Clouds of red dust flew in. Palm-tree fronds grew brown at the tips. The flowering shrubs wilted and ceased to bloom. Leather lost its pliancy and grew hard; paper curled, and hair crackled dryly when combed. It became increasingly easy to lose patience over trifles. There was no escape from the building up of heat and tension. There was a sense of waiting, taut expectation.

The rainy season did not begin all at once. There were flashes of lightning and rumblings in the distance night after night. We watched and waited. Late in the afternoon, ragged clouds would darken the sky. Then the wind began, and big drops of water pockmarked the dust. Soon all was noise and water. There was a wall of rain. It ran under the window shutters and doors and over the concrete floor of the screened hall along the bedrooms. We mopped up cheerfully from room to room. After all, it was raining! The rain transformed everything. Grass, gardens, flowers, and shrubs came alive. Villagers hastily planted fresh crops. After a deluge of rain, the sky would clear and the sun would come out, and the whole college compound would look newly scrubbed.

But the rainy season brought its own peculiar problems. Shoes and luggage became coated with green mould if they weren't sunned every other day. Books became damp and mouldy. Furniture took on a blue cast. Envelopes perversely sealed themselves shut. Clothes were damp and would mildew while hanging in the closet. We finally bought a little electric closet-heater called "Peter, the heater," which helped enormously. The bed sheets always felt damp during the rainy season and had to be hung on the line every day. We became accustomed to a constant musty smell.

After a rain, we had invasions of winged ants which fell into

our food and down our necks and drove us out of the living-dining room into the screened areas of the bedrooms. After their only flight, they shake off their wings leaving a litter half-an-inch deep on the floor. Those that survived frogs, ants and other insects crawled away to go underground and form new colonies.

Then the moths came in batches, some brown and orange, some with shadings of white and grey, and fluttered maddeningly around our defenseless heads. The beetles were a real menace. Some were two-to-three inches in length. With their hard, glossy shells they crashed and zoomed into the lamps, walls, and door glass making a frightening buzzing sound. We waged constant war on ants of all kinds: little insidious ants that covered opened food in the kitchen in a matter of minutes, large black ants, and red ants that hid in the rug and bit our feet and ankles. Win often killed centipedes in the bathroom and once he killed a ten-inch black snake which was slithering down the hall.

But our worse fright was our encounter with a five-foot black cobra. Win heard a fluttering, crackling noise about ten o'clock one evening by our front door. He quickly grabbed the flashlight and investigated. There was a cobra right outside the door fighting with a chicken. Win immediately set off to find the night watchman who was resting in a garage doorway down the street. The night watchman was as terrified as he and by the time they decided to return, the snake had gone.

We called the head of the University Zoo, Mr. Mensah, the next morning, and he immediately came over. The chicken was dead on its nest of eggs from the poisonous bite of the snake. He found the snake's path and was able to tell it was a black spitting cobra. He asked us to keep the children in the house that afternoon as a cobra's bite can be fatal within six hours. The zoo keeper returned that night complete with face shield and equipment and searched an hour for the snake. He kept hoping fervently that he would find it, for he had no really large cobras in the zoo at this time, only small ones. I kept

hoping fervently that he would find it, too. Finally, he buried the dead hen and eggs and said without that inducement the snake would probably not return.

The incident had an amusing side. A friend came out from the United States Information Service to have dinner with us that evening. As he got out of his car, I called to him and asked him if he'd mind turning on the light in the garage so Win could see when he arrived home from his class. He nonchalantly walked over, hitting the bushes as he went.

"I wouldn't walk so close to those bushes," I said.

He laughed. "Is there something in them?"

"It might be a cobra."

He was highly amused by this and asked, "Do you see them often?"

"Well, we did last night."

"You're joking."

I assured him that I wasn't and that Mr. Mensah from the zoo would be arriving any minute to search for it. "My God," he said, "you really do mean it."

As we sat on the back terrace he kept looking surreptitiously behind him. I finally said, "Don't worry, Herb, cobras only look for chickens."

"That is what's worrying me; that it will come around the house looking for us chickens."

Our friends back home seemed to take for granted that living in Africa meant hobnobbing with lions, tigers, and elephants. We had to reply apologetically that apart from a stray horse, goats, dogs, pigs, and monkeys we could only boast of all kinds of snakes, scorpions, bats that flew nonchalantly through the living room in the evenings, and orange lizards. The black-and-orange lizards are really quite beautiful. They are so numerous that you grow quite accustomed to seeing them sunning contentedly on the back terrace, scurrying across the living room, and even eating crumbs from under the table. They keep the flies and small insect population down appreciably. Once in a while, a small lizard may fall from the ceiling into

the bathtub while you are taking a bath. One of my friends had one crawl out of her suitcase in Lisbon. This caused great alarm and consternation among the chambermaids.

But one of the minor frustrations that assumed major proportions did not come from wildlife, but from our neighbor's red rooster. Every morning at five-thirty he came and stood beneath our bedroom window and crowed long, loud, and triumphantly. I never could figure out why he chose our window for this dubious honor, as I'm hardly alive at that hour. It was terrible to face each new day with murder in my heart.

The night after the cobra incident, I awoke feeling uneasy. As I put my hand under the sheet, I felt something crawling. I leaped out of bed, threw back the covers, and turned on the lamp with one movement. There was a huge, black, shiny cockroach in bed with us. These cockroaches are as large as a half-dollar and are loathsome things. I swatted at it, and it moved towards Win. By then he was awake enough to swat it back on my side, mumbling, "Whattsa going on? Whattsa matter?"

It was touch and go before I won the final battle. As I crawled wearily back into bed, I said, "The words of the song make sense."

At that my poor husband, now wide awake, sat up in bed and said suspiciously, "What song?"

"The one that goes something like, 'Why, oh why, did I ever leave Indiana.'"

## CHAPTER VI

### Classes for the People

THE INTELLECTUAL CAPACITY of a nation is as important as its physical resources, be they cocoa farms or gold mines. One of the functions of adult education in any country is to pick up that potential ability which has so far slipped through the existing educational net.

When Win had the opportunity to come out to the University college of Ghana to teach in the Institute of Extra-Mural Studies, we knew the aim was to provide adult education at an advanced level and that he would take his courses to the people in their communities. But the things we didn't know would fill a book. Most American college professors would quail before the demands of a class of schoolteachers, cocoa farmers, and government clerks in Ghana. You must be entertaining and intellectual, serious and witty. The students came because they wanted to, and you'd jolly well better give them what they wanted or they would stop coming.

There were regular weekly classes in International Affairs, Economics, Comparative Government, Economic Geography, French, Local Government, English Literature, Political Theory, British Constitution, etc., held in one hundred different centers in Ghana. The classes run for twenty weeks. One needs only to compare Ghana with the surrounding territories to see what an enormous advantage it is that there are opportunities within the reach of the people for serious study under the guidance of a qualified tutor.

Only a few thousand students attend Extra-Mural classes but usually the leaders of the community were among them.

Thus the benefits of the classes were extended to even more people.

Teaching out in the villages, you come to know the people and what they are thinking as you could in no other way. Some walked three or four miles to attend the classes. Win had one class sixty miles from Accra at a little village that was still in the bush. There was no electricity, and class was held by the light of a kerosene lantern. He picked up his students along the way until the car would hold no more. Most of them were primary-school teachers and quite isolated intellectually. His class on International Affairs was the big event of the week. Their curiosity was boundless. They asked searching questions on the United States government, foreign policy, and political parties—things which Americans take for granted. Their knowledge of the United States, geographically, economically, and politically, far surpassed the average American university student's knowledge of Africa who thinks in terms of big-game hunting, Stanley and Livingstone, and the "dark continent"—not in terms of modern cities, schools, airports, libraries, and a people who are going forward at an astonishing speed.

The classes were stimulating and challenging. I often went along for the ride. And what a ride! The car bumped along over the stones, sand, and potholes of many "first class" roads. It was hard on the tires, springs, and engine, too. Cars in the Extra-Mural department were short lived. The drive up to the class was pleasant enough, but coming back it was nerve-racking due to the hurtling mammy-lorries. Mammy wagons, or lorries, are the most common means of transportation in Ghana. They may be dilapidated contraptions, wide open, with the planks laid crossways in the back of the truck for seats or they may be shiny new Volkswagen minibuses. Both kinds have two things in common—they are overcrowded and overloaded with boxes and bags of produce, fowls, and perhaps even a bicycle tied on the top. Secondly, they all have slogans emblazoned either across the back or front: "Never Trust a Beautiful Woman," "All the World's a Stage," "Let Them Say," "Trust in

God," "Never Despair," "Again," "So What?" "Still in the Mood," "Happy Boy," "Pay the Man Now," and "A Beautiful Woman Never Stays Long With One Man." As one big careening lorry whipped around us on a hair-pin turn one night, we read "Still Alive." Win burst out resentfully, "How, I'll never know." These vehicles could block the road ahead of an ordinary car for miles, unmoved by the most desperate signals of horn and headlamps. When at last the lorry driver signaled an invitation to pass, they gave up so little of the narrow road that passing became a test of nerves, calculation, and skill.

One rainy, pitch-black night, as Win was returning from a class, he came upon a lorry stopped in the road with no flares or reflector lights. This is quite common; if a car runs out of gas or breaks down, it is never pushed off on the side but remains right on the road. This night he was blinded by the glaring headlights of an approaching car. He saw the parked lorry too late. He braked sharply and pulled off the road. The car turned over. He desperately pushed open a door and crawled out thinking it would catch on fire. Within a few minutes, four Africans materialized out of the bush and helped him lift the little Opel out of the ditch and set it back on the road. Two of them were from the abandoned lorry. I said indignantly that they should have been ashamed to show their faces. He said that far from being ashamed, they were delighted to see him and hitched a ride back into Accra with him. Miraculously he suffered only a few bruises, and the car lost only a few chrome strips around the door.

Another hazard was the goats and sheep that roamed the roads. It was time-consuming if you killed a sheep or goat. You had to count on at least an hour's palaver with the owner. Perhaps the greatest difficulty in actually holding classes came from natural hazards. A tropical torrent of rain would kill a class quicker than the proclamation of emergency regulations. Adult education has sometimes literally been brought to a halt by the fall of a giant silk cotton tree smack across the only road.

One evening, Win promised the class a guest lecturer from the French Embassy, but he unfortunately fell ill at the last minute so Win drafted me. He nonchalantly said that there wasn't any reason why I couldn't go and talk to them on the Soviet government. I tried quickly to think of some but they weren't good enough, so I gathered up some outlines (they adore outlines, charts, pamphlets, anything that they can take with them) and we set forth.

As we picked up the men students in the little villages and at crossroads, he would explain that I was going to lecture to them. They thought this was excruciatingly funny. "Madame, lecture on Russia?" and this would set them off in howls of laughter. Evidently a mere wife didn't meddle in her professor-husband's job. Win was getting a little embarrassed at all this derisive laughter. I took this amusement for some ten miles then firmly explained to them that I had been teaching in the university at home for several years and that I wasn't just "housewife." I further explained I was teaching a course in Comparative Governments in Accra on Wednesday evenings to thirty students. By now they were looking more respectfully and were convinced that the professor wasn't "making joke" with them. At the end of the class they all lined up, solemnly shook hands, and asked me to come again. I silently forgave them for their previous ridicule.

One of the high spots of Win's classes in the bush came when he gave out the half dozen copies of *Time* that he bought for them each week. They were like children waiting for a treat. I can't describe their pleasure in getting up-to-date news of what was going on in the world.

Win taught a class in International Affairs in the village of Asamakasee. It was a bright and interesting class. Clerks, school-teachers, and supervisors from cocoa farms would eventually arrive at 6 P.M. Discussion on Nasser, the Middle East, and the Suez crisis would reach a high pitch. It would get so dark in the room that Win couldn't see the map or blackboard and then miraculously an African boy would bear a lantern in and hang it in the middle of the room. Eventually the class would reluc-



tantly end, and we would fill our car with students and start the fifty-mile trip home.

Our ride home might be hazardous, but it was always interesting. The small villages would be dotted with glimmering lights from the street traders' stalls. Smoky, flickering oil lanterns lighted the ebony faces of the vendors and their stacks of small wares and made a deep mystery of the darkness behind them. There would still be smoke from the charcoal braziers where the evening food had been prepared. Babies, goats, chickens, and whole families mixed in small chattering groups. Then the road would become a long, straight stretch of black silence where the brightness of our headlights traveled softly over the wayside bush, or dazzled to a standstill an occasional plodding, head-loaded figure or illuminated a solitary bicycle rider.

My class in Accra was made up mainly of government workers, teachers, and clerks. When we came out to Ghana, I meant to have a year of leisure and not teach, but I decided I also wanted first-hand contact with the Ghanaian. I never regretted it. This particular class was unusually rewarding although at times their questions, asked in all sincerity, left me momentarily speechless. We were discussing the Constitution of the United States and came to the second amendment in the Bill of Rights which reads: "Since a well-regulated militia is essential to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms must not be interfered with." A hand went up and one young man said triumphantly, "Aha, so that is why you have so much shootings in Chicago, you let them bear arms." That interpretation of the constitution surprised me, as I am sure it would have surprised the Founding Fathers. Another time, a student commented that our President was a very weak man or he would dismiss Governor Faubus. It took me the rest of the hour to explain that under a federal system, unlike a unitary one, our President had no control over the Governor. He understood me perfectly, but remained convinced that something was wrong with the system if Eisenhower could not control Faubus. One can understand his feelings.

In a new country still close to the tribal forms, it's not cus-

tomary to defend your enemies' right to criticize and attack you. Democracy takes some explaining, and while the Ghanaian has had the English for an example, he still thinks it's easier to deport your enemy instead of converting him. Another thing you might try some day is to explain why the Ford or Rockefeller Foundation gives away money. The first question is, "What do they expect to get back from it?"

The things we take for granted need a lot of explaining on the other side of the world, and I often felt terribly inadequate. When the class began they were not used to an American accent, and they felt I "rolled my words." I figured out that I pronounced my "r's" and I probably talked too fast. I said "marvelous"; the English say "mavelous." Frankly, I had trouble understanding them. They speak rapidly, with very soft, low voices. But as time went on, we understood each other very well. The last night of class several of the students gave speeches. They like long, formal, flowery speeches and when one concluded by saying he hoped "God would bless and keep 'learned lady' and she would come again soon," I felt my eyes misting over.

When you go out to a university to teach, you are a new face with new ideas and you receive many invitations to speak. One Saturday night, Win was invited to speak at a Teacher Training College fifty miles from Accra. We were invited to have dinner with the principal and his wife before the lecture. They were old-timers who had been on the West Coast for twenty years. He still wore the high mosquito boots with his dress clothes. She had been "out" too long as they say on the Coast. She looked at me but didn't see me. She constantly hummed a little tune, staring straight ahead. We went to the auditorium, and Win was introduced to the three hundred students. He had talked for five minutes when the bats flew in. They swooped in front of him, behind him, and over his head. The principal and students paid not the slightest attention. Win steadily talked on. I watched this spectacle open-mouthed. If I had been on the stage, I would have jumped out the window and disappeared into the night.

Ghanaians like long programs with singing, speeches, and much formality. I found this out by firsthand experience. Millie Murphy, whose husband heads the Africa-American Institute in Accra, was going on leave. She asked me if I'd mind substituting for her in a local secondary school's annual Speech Day Celebrations. I would only have to present the prizes at the appropriate time. I readily agreed. As I dashed off at three o'clock, I told my family that I would be back in an hour or so. I arrived promptly at three-thirty in my white dress, shoes, and gloves and was greeted warmly and taken directly to the playing field where we sat and watched the gymnastic display for an hour. As the dust swirled about us, I became a little less white. After refreshments, the singing and drumming began, then the innumerable speeches. At last, I presented fifty books as prizes. It grew dark. Then followed remarks by the chairman, votes of thanks, doxology, and benediction. I madly drove home. I had been gone four hours!

Week-end conferences were a part of the Extra-Mural program. They were held in different parts of Ghana, and the lectures were grouped around one theme. It gives the people in that area an opportunity to hear outside speakers. The resident tutor in Trans-Volta Togoland, Paul Bertleson wanted to hold a week-end conference in Tsito on "The United States Today." We Americans at the university agreed to go and lecture. There was tremendous interest and seventy-five Africans including two chiefs walked, drove, bicycled, or came by lorry to the conference. They arrived at the Awudome Residential Adult College by tea time. As I was the only woman on the program, the three other men allowed me to talk first on "Recent Elections and Political Parties in the U.S." Mr. Birmingham followed with "Economic Conditions in the U.S." He is a British Senior Lecturer in Economics at the University College, but had just spent six months lecturing at Roosevelt University in Chicago. He held them spellbound describing the average income in the United States. He candidly pointed out how hard the average American works, that even very few high-salaried Americans have servants, that we consider it no loss of prestige to work

with our hands. Many Ghanaians feel as soon as they get a college degree they are entitled to a white-collar job and wouldn't dream of doing any manual work. They find it difficult to understand why Americans, who have big cars, radios, "fridges," and all kinds of labor-saving gadgets, work so hard.

For dinner that evening, we had rice and groundnut stew made with palm oil. It is the universal Ghanaian dish. For Sunday dinner the next day, more rice and groundnut stew, but as a concession to us, they omitted some of the pepper from the stew and put extra red pepper on the tables in little dishes. I found the stew quite hot enough without adding more red pepper. On Sunday, Dr. St. Clair Drake, a visiting Professor in Sociology at the University College on leave from Roosevelt University in Chicago, talked on "The Situation in Little Rock." Dr. Drake did a fine job on this. He was both fair and objective and, as he is an American Negro, was listened to with great respect. Win closed the conference by talking on "United States Foreign Policy Today." These titles give a clue to subjects that the African is tremendously interested in, and there were dozens of questions after every lecture. A week-end conference is an opportunity not only for intellectual stimulation but for social intercourse. There is much laughter, talking, and singing.

The highlight of the whole Extra-Mural program is the New Year School. It has become a national institution in the West African adult-educational world. Two days after Christmas, some three hundred fifty teachers, civil servants, cocoa farmers, businessmen, chiefs, clergy, and housewives, arrive at the University College to take up residence for ten days. It is a mixed audience forming one of the most interesting groups a lecturer can have. It is a colorful audience; the white shirts and grey trousers are there, but also the kente cloths and the northern smocks with a few Yoruba dresses in between—all brightened up by an ingenious array of ladies' wear. Some have come a long way—from the savannas, the forestland, and the towns from all over Ghana, and some even from other countries in Africa. Above all, it is an audience that wants to know what is

going on in the world. They will listen carefully but not leave it at that. Whether the lecturer is a cabinet minister, a world-renowned expert in constitutional law, or an ambassador, there are many, and often searching, questions after the lecture.

The students attend seminars of their choice in the morning for two hours. International Relations, which Win taught, was very popular and had one of the largest enrollments. In the afternoon, they could read in the library, take tours to the new harbor at Tema, or attend drumming and dancing. After dinner, there were the open lectures given by world-famous people from Nigeria, Gambia, Canada, United States, United Nations, and Australia. Elizabeth Drake, from Chicago, whose husband was teaching at the university, and I were asked to represent American women's viewpoints on the women's panel on the last day of the New Year School. Most of the young Ghanaian women in front of us were schoolteachers. They came with searching questions. They weren't satisfied with the old ways of a man going out alone socially and being the absolute ruler in his household. Yet they didn't understand the new ways. I know they did not believe Elizabeth and me when we told them that men washed dishes, changed diapers, and even helped cook in the States. We didn't make an impression, for what African man would do those things? I really felt inadequate and a world apart trying to explain equality between man and wife to them.

The New Year School provided an opportunity for exchanging ideas with people from different parts of Ghana who never have occasion to meet, for hearing new viewpoints expressed and re-examines old ones, and for living in the surroundings and atmosphere of their leading university. For ten days they had a chance to partake of the educational bread.

There is still much to be done in adult education, but the Extra-Mural classes have speeded up the development of the citizens who run the country. Great credit should be given to Mr. David Kimble, Director of Extra-Mural Studies, for this ambitious program.

## CHAPTER VII

# Christmas in the Tropics

**CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS** in the tropics requires unlimited imagination or none at all. It is as unreal as trying to celebrate it in the States in July.

The calendar and the mounting dry season told us Christmas was close at hand. So did Accra's largest department store. The loudspeaker blared out Christmas carols from the first of November on. The shopping season opens earlier in Africa than at home. Expatriates have to mail their packages and cards to the U. K. and the States by the 10th of November if they were to arrive at their destinations by December 25. There was no choice—shopping had to be finished early.

It may seem difficult to work up any Yuletide spirit when you are overcome by the heat, but children's enchantment with Christmas is not easily quenched, which proves that geography is only a state of mind. We perspiringly prepared for the Christmas season, not the way we would have at home, but. . .

We stocked the larder with imported U.S. frozen turkey, canned fruitcake, plum pudding, and all the goodies we could find in the shops. On the afternoon of Christmas Eve, the Shinés, our next-door neighbors came for tea. Their thirteen-year-old daughter, Caroline, was home from boarding school in England for the holidays so she came with them. She introduced an "other-world feeling" when she told of the snow she'd gone through in London the day before to get to the airport. Afterwards Win, the three children, and I drove around to friends' houses delivering small packages to their children. We decided then we would drive down the road to the Lisbon Hotel by

the airport and see the Christmas trees and lights. We had brought no Christmas decorations from the States with us and we had nearly worn out our one Christmas record "Around the World at Christmas" sung by Bing Crosby. So we sat in the glow of the gaily colored lights on the little imported trees on the Lisbon terrace drinking orange squash and listening to their recorded Christmas carols.

Strangely enough, it didn't seem incongruous to be sitting on a hotel terrace with our children on Christmas Eve. There were no traditions to live up to, nor was there any pattern to follow. The full moon and big, warm stars seemed utterly unlike the frosty stars of other Christmases. I think the feeling of unreality began earlier in that Christmas week when we attended an all-university carol service in the outdoor theater at Commonwealth Hall. Here we sat in the bright moonlight under the stars in sun-backed dresses singing "Silent Night" and "Good King Wenceslas" with poinsettia trees in full bloom.

A week before Christmas, the American Women's Group in Accra had staged a carnival on Ambassador Flake's lawn. Games, homemade cakes, pies, and candy, a fish pond, fortune teller, hot dog stand, popcorn, and homemade Christmas presents all contrived to bring an American flavor to an exotic setting. We worked as hard as I ever did for the P.T.A. or church bazaar at home. We cleared three thousand dollars for Prime Minister Nkrumah's community-chest fund. It was an American carnival, but the milling crowd was international. Lebanese, Egyptians, Indians, French, Nigerians, Syrians—the whole International Community came plus a thousand Ghanaians. They loved every minute of it.

Even our gifts to each other were different this year. At home we always buy a present for the house. This year we bought five beautifully carved Ashanti chiefs' stools, one for each of us, for the house. We decided we would think of how we would get them home later. Ivory jewelry, beautiful carved heads, ebony elephant bookends, and calabashes were exchanged happily to everybody's satisfaction on Christmas morn-

ing. I had asked Win earlier if he had any yearnings for anything special. He promptly said that he wanted a Koran. Privately, I thought this a little odd for a deacon in the Reformed Church of America, but that seemed far away. This was here and now, so he had his Koran on Christmas morning.

We carefully took from the closet the little artificial tree that the previous householder had left and set it on the table Christmas Eve, and the children confidently hung up pillowcases and hoped Father Christmas would not forget them. Henrietta, our seven-year-old, explained to me earlier that you didn't hang up stockings in Ghana and look for Santa Claus, that *all* the children in her school room hung pillowcases and waited for Father Christmas. There was no question of what she and George would do. If it was Father Christmas who remembered the good children in Africa, she and her brother would fall in line and hope for the best.

Christmas morning we went to Legon Hall chapel to an all-university family service. George, our six-year-old, was asked to pass the collection plate for the first time. There was no hesitancy, but he showed no faith in his fellow men, instead of letting the plate go down the row, he squeezed past in front of them and never let it leave his hand as they dropped their money in. All of the parents showed a fine charitable spirit towards this new way of passing the plate, but his contemporaries glared angrily as he stepped on their toes. Henrietta, of course, said that she had never been so humiliated.

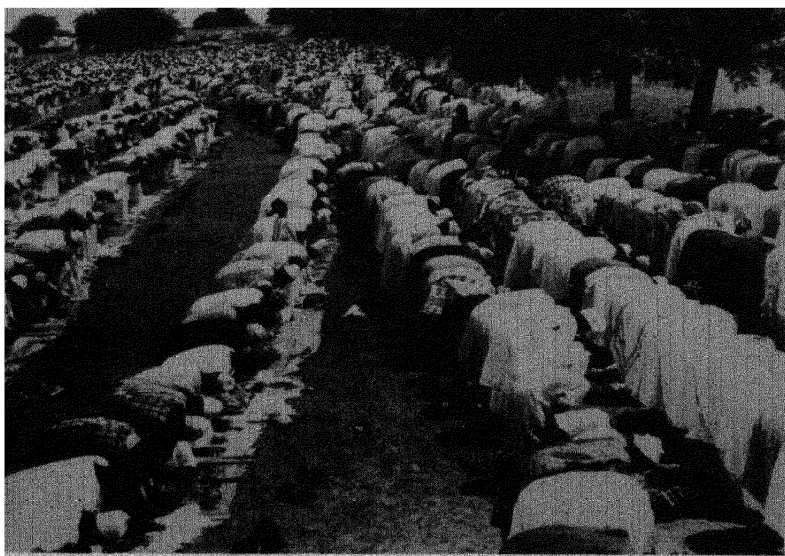
We invited a marine who was stationed at the American Embassy to share our Christmas dinner. He was feeling that Milwaukee was quite far away that day and as I picked marigolds for the table and made iced tea, I felt Indiana was not exactly next door. Anyway, we decided to make the best of both worlds and planned a trip in the afternoon to the beach to cool off after the traditional Christmas dinner.

After the exhausted children had fallen to sleep, we switched on the radio to get the nine o'clock Voice of America broadcast. The announcer described the weather on Christmas Day in

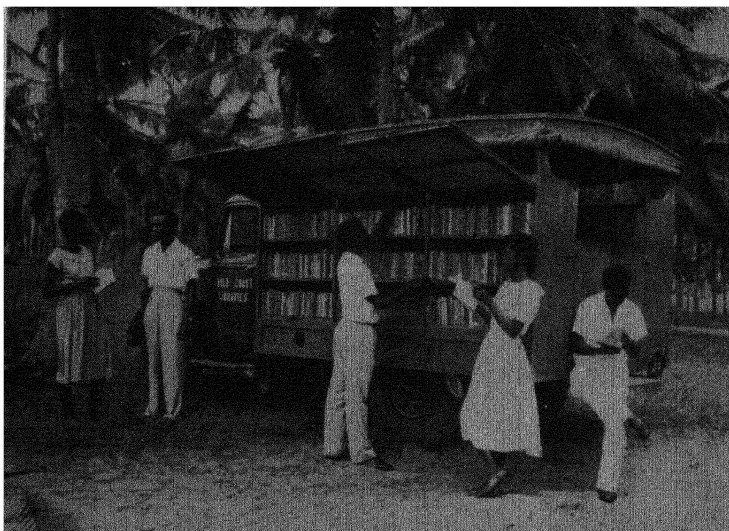




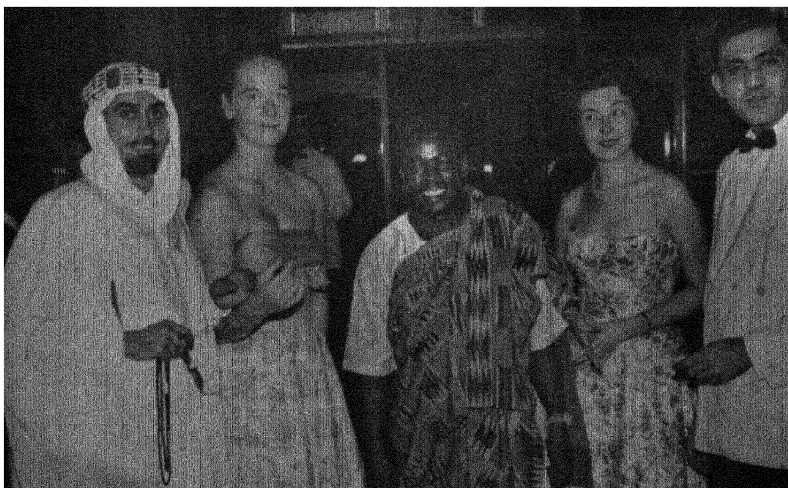
Ghanaian Children at a Day Nursery



Observance of Ramadan by Moslems



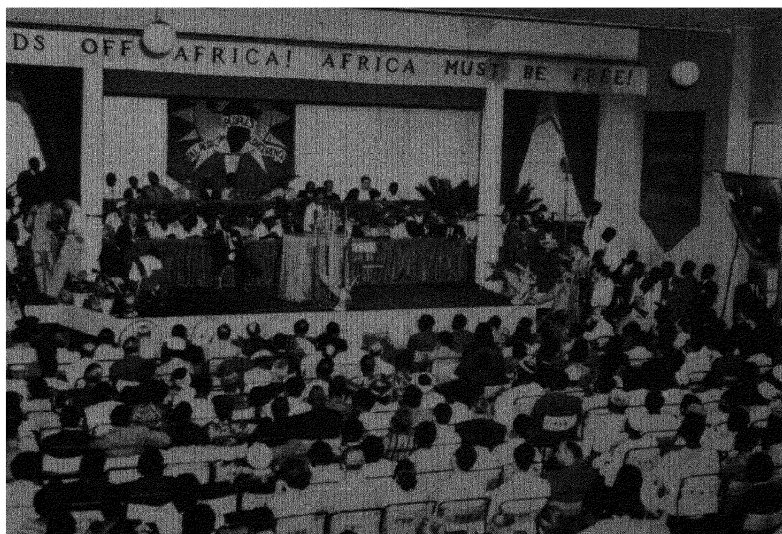
Bookmobile Visiting a Remote Area



Author's Daughter (*second from l.*) at Child Welfare Ball, Ambassador Hotel



Dredging Diamonds From the Rich African Earth



All-African People's Conference in Progress



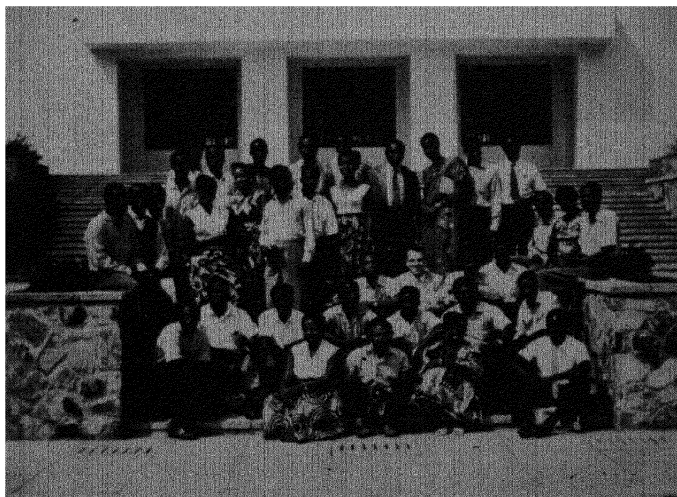
**Kofi Antubam, a Leading Artist, Painting the Murals in the  
Ambassador Hotel**



**Weaving Kente Cloth on Foot-guided Looms**



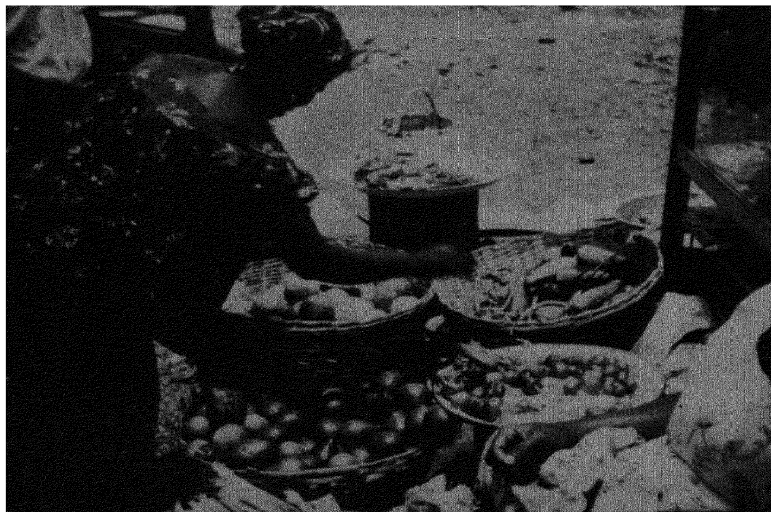
Dr. Cone at Class Meeting at the University



Dr. Cone With His Adult Education Class

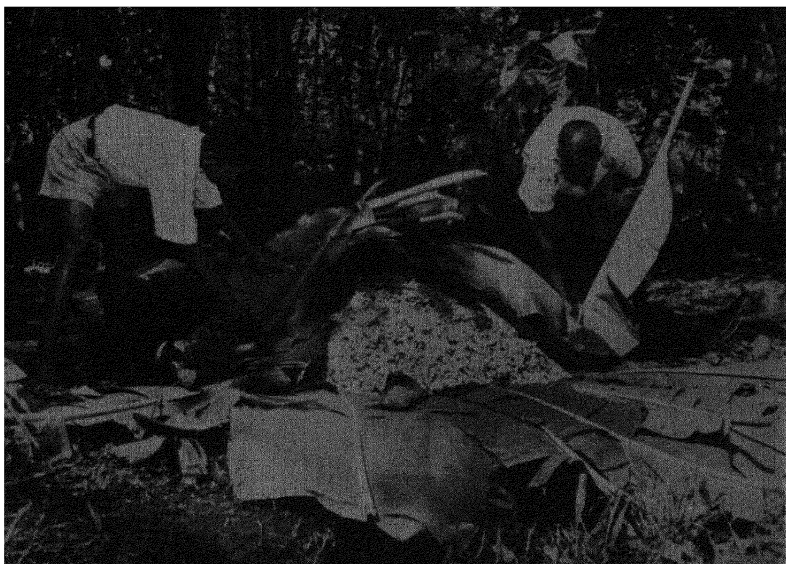


Drummer With "Talking" Drums—Male and Female



Comfort, the Market Mammy, Selecting Vegetables

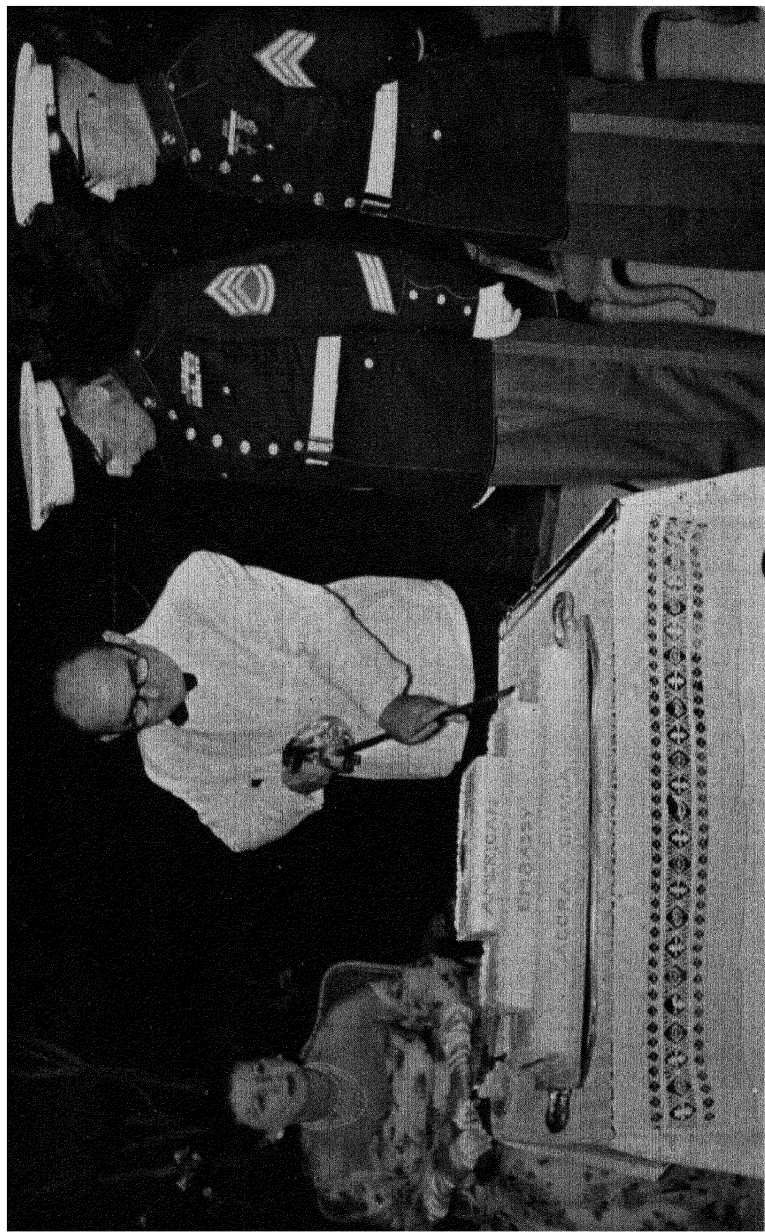




Cocoa Beans Drying on Palm Leaves



Market Mammies in Market Scene



American Marine Ball in Accra—Ambassador and Mrs. Flake



Chicago, Sioux City, Perth Amboy, and Beaver Falls with the snow and zero temperatures. Of course, it was midafternoon in the States as we were six hours ahead in West Africa. As we listened to the American accent, we could hear the drumming, clapping, and dancing of the houseboys in Christian Village, a mile down the road. It wasn't hard then to feel a world apart. The day after Christmas is Boxing Day, a national holiday. Early that morning the gardener, night watchman, garbage collector, and ex-car boy all called for their dash.

The following day we went with the Friends Group to the beach for a picnic. We arrived just before a beautiful harmattan sunset, had a swim, ate our picnic supper and then sat by the big breakers until the full moon rose slowly and majestically. African and European voices blended with perfect harmony, singing all the old familiar Christmas Carols until the small children began falling asleep. We reluctantly gathered up our things and turned homeward in the warm, still moonlight.

All through January, boxes arrived with gaily wrapped packages from grandparents, relatives, and friends. The last box arrived in the middle of February, and Christmas cards sent by surface mail kept coming until February. It was exhilarating. Every card and package we opened was Christmas all over and brought a touch of home. So despite equatorial snags and tropical heat we did not lack the spirit of Christmas.

## CHAPTER VIII

### On Trek

WE ARRIVED IN TAMALE at night. We had made the long trip in one day, leaving behind us a cloud of yellow dust for five hundred rough, winding West African miles. We left the Accra plain on the coast at daybreak in a blinding rain and drove north through the Ashanti rain forest. Here it is difficult for the eye to become accustomed to the blue of the vast hot sky, to the red richness of the steaming earth, and to the brilliant green of tropical vegetation.

It was our first trip to the Northern Territories. The Northern Region or N.T.'s, as they are familiarly called, contains over one half the area of Ghana but only one-fifth the population. The terrain is flatter, dryer, and hotter than the rest of Ghana. The savannah land is not as productive as the rich cocoa farms and forests further south. It lies too close to the Sahara. Here there are fewer schools, more illiteracy; a poorer diet, more disease. The southern Ghanaian, who wears the rich kente cloth, looks down on his more primitive kinsman in the north in the white cotton smock. When Prime Minister Nkrumah wants to identify himself with the North, he always wears the N.T. smock. It is good psychology as well as good politics.

The University College holds its annual Easter School in the Northern Region every spring. We knew Win would be on the program, so had waited until then to visit the North.

When you take a trip in Africa you go "on trek." In the old days when missionaries, traders, and government officers tramped through the African interior with equipment slung on bearer's poles, they took what they could and subsisted on

native food when their food ran out, and journeys were counted in days rather than hours. This arduous way of covering the country involved hardships, dangers, and disease, but they did get to know the territories and people more intimately than is possible when using modern transportation.

Today many of the main roads are admirably surfaced, and traveling by car and lorry is generally successful if the driver makes allowances for breakdowns, has an emergency supply of petrol, and carries food and water. It isn't the kind of traveling Americans are used to. The petrol stations do not have rest rooms, and there are no restaurants or hotels along the way. There are few hotels outside of Accra. There is not a single place to get a drink of water until you reach a rest house. The government runs all the rest houses and there are two kinds, to one the motorist brings all his own food, bedding, towels, and supplies and may have to do his own cooking; in the other, a catering rest house, meals are served. All rooms must be booked ahead, as there is a great demand.

The four of us—Jim Lipscomb from Texas, who was setting up a School of Business Administration at the University College, Dr. St. Clair Drake, Win, and I—expected to make the five hundred-mile journey in one day so we had not brought the usual amount of gear—cots, bedding, nets, water filters, and chop boxes.

We were slowed down by a streaming wall of rain as we were ready to take off that morning. When the rainy season begins, it often rains every morning. Then we lost our way and drove an extra fifty miles. The roads are poorly marked or not marked at all. It is hopeless to ask directions. The question, "Is this the road to Mampong?" would invariably bring the reply, "Yes, please." After all, the African wants to be agreeable and make people happy.

Thus we arrived at Yegi, our only ferry route across the Volta River, at five minutes after six. The ferry stopped at six, and the boys had gone home. There were a half-dozen lorries waiting patiently until the ferry started again at six the next

morning. We felt panicky. The village had no lights, no hotel, no restaurant. We had eaten peanut-butter sandwiches and boiled eggs all day. We decided there must be a way. A guide took us to the toll keeper's house. He was not there, but with his son we toured the village. By the time it was dark we returned to his house. He was suddenly "at home." We suspected he had been there all the time and only hoped we would give up and accept the inevitable. We persisted and after much palaver and offering to dash him and his ferry boys generously he decided to allow us to cross. Americans call such infectious bribery "graft" but it pervades every kind of African association or service. (You find some exceptions among the civil servants.) It is harsh to condemn the practice of dashing, since white men in the tropics are regarded as plutocrats. An hour later, the toll keeper rounded up his boys and we crossed the ferry by the headlights of Jim's car.

There had been no petrol stations for miles before we reached the ferry, and we were running low on fuel. We asked in the first village where we would find a station. We were told just 118 miles more. There was nothing to do but go on as far as we could on borrowed time. Two hours later, we coasted to a stop and climbed wearily out of the car. The intense darkness and night silence were strange, even awesome, as the silence of remote primitive places can be to people who are used to the reassuring background of town noises. It was not a still silence but alive with an undercurrent of chirping insects and small, secret sounds and always the sound of the distant drums. We did not have long to wait, as the first lorry that came by stopped. The driver had an extra drum of petrol and willingly sold us a gallon. Another lorry stopped to see if he could help us. Here, no car would dream of passing a motorist in trouble by day or night. We finally arrived at the government rest house at Tamale at 9:30 P.M. They had stopped serving at nine o'clock, so dinner was finished. So were we. We gloomily ate more peanut butter and cheese in our rooms and fell exhaustedly into bed.

The next day, as soon as classes were over, we drove fifty miles out to a typical northern village called Dboya. I had never been in a village like it. We parked the car and an ancient African poled us across the White Volta in a leaking canoe. We approached the village on foot in the 99° heat. I felt like Stanley looking for Livingstone. Fortunately, almost immediately we met an educated young Ghanaian who was part of a United Nations health team stationed in the area. He spoke excellent English and interpreted for us. He told us with engaging candor that this village of 1,500 had the highest rate of sleeping sickness in Ghana plus yaws, leprosy, Guinea worm, and a blinding disease called onchocerciasis.

Some fifty women and their naked little *piccans* followed us around the village staring at me. When I asked the man from UNICEF why they were staring, he said that I was one of the few white women to visit their village. He presented us to the chief and acted as interpreter. The chief, a man of great dignity, sat on his throne chair in a dim, hot, dirty room. We all bowed and shook hands and inquired about his health. He motioned us to sit on a bench in front of him and promptly presented us with a dozen eggs as his gift to us. Not knowing we would be so honored, we were quite unequal to the occasion and had nothing for him. We politely inquired if he would allow us to give some small coins to his numerous *piccans*, or children. He graciously consented.

We watched the villagers dye cloth in huge vats in the ground. This day everything was coming out navy blue, which is a favorite color in the North. Some were weaving cloth. Some were cooking chop. Many sat motionless in any available shade doing absolutely nothing. We were consumed with thirst, and our guide said we could buy some bottled soda water. That seemed too good to be true. We went into the only shop where a sleepy clerk climbed up and took a dusty bottle of soda water off the shelf and handed it to us. We were not fussy at that stage, we dusted the hot bottle off, and champagne never tasted better. Soon we set out for the canoe and crossed the river

again. It was full of people swimming, bathing, washing their clothes, and getting drinking water. The river was the social center of the village. It seemed as unreal and melodramatic as if I had stumbled upon a Hollywood set of *The African Queen*.

The next day we drove one hundred miles to the border and crossed over into the French Territory of the Upper Volta. We visited mosques—the north of Ghana is predominantly Moslem. We visited a crocodile lake where the small boys begged us to buy a live chicken so we could use it for chop and lure the crocodiles out of the water. My stomach rebelled at the thought of this, so one chicken was saved from being chopped.

We visited the market in Bolgatanga where they weave the colorful baskets and sew the unbleached white smocks. One enterprising young vendor kept wanting me to buy "women's dress." I found out his idea of "women's dress" was not quite what I had in mind. It was a narrow adjustable leather belt with straps of leather six inches long fastened to the front of the belt. This is the part of Ghana where women wear the least clothes. They may wear the belt with the leather strips attached, or the belt may have two tufts of grass, or they may wear only a piece of cloth around their hips. The ladies of the Accra Women's Club in the South have been waging an intensive campaign to get clothes on the women in the North. They have been collecting clothes in the U.K. and the States to distribute. They have made some progress, but at times they must think their cause is hopeless. They had given some yards of cloth to one young woman. The next time she saw them coming, she rushed into her house and proudly draped the cloth around her shoulders, more as a trimming, and came happily out dressed in only the belt with the tufts of grass. I'm not sure that the women in the hotter northern climate will be happy or comfortable dressed in yards of the mammy cloth they wear in the south. The piccans mostly go naked. The men wear the smocks and Western dress, although some are still seen in the loin cloth. The women complain that the

men work and take the money and buy clothes for themselves and give them nothing for cloth. It may well be true.

We saw mud and wattle villages with thatched roofs where the people share their huts with livestock, chickens, and goats. The people are all friendly, but instead of calling you "Madame," they call you "sister," showing the missionary influence.

It was an exciting week in Tamale. Win killed a scorpion in our bedroom. They are quite common. The veterinarian told us that his five-year-old son had been stung at least three times. We ran out of boiled water and drank gallons of unboiled water and hoped we wouldn't get stomach upsets. We slept under nets which we detested as they kept out the air, but they also kept out the mosquitos.

Earlier in the year, we had made trips to Cape Coast and had seen the castles built by the Danes, Dutch, and Portuguese and later used to hold slaves until they could be shipped off to America. We visited Takoradi, one of the largest seaports on the west coast of Africa. Here were ships from all over the world—the harbor can berth nine large ships at once. We saw ships loading cocoa, manganese, gold, and precious diamonds. Takoradi is Ghana's main port until Tema is finished. Takoradi has had the disadvantage of being 120 miles from the capital, Accra. Tema is only 12 miles from Accra. Accra itself has no true harbor. Ships must stop two miles out and all cargo has to be brought in on little surf boats. It is a risky business, and many people have lost their trunks and precious baggage to the sea. If passengers come by sea to Accra, they take the little surf boats and then are carried on the backs of strong Ghanaian seamen the last one hundred yards unless they want to wade in. Mrs. Birmingham, the seventy-year-old mother of a friend of ours, arrived from the U.K. for a visit by ship. She was surprised and amused to arrive in so unexpected and unconventional a manner.

We took a short holiday at Amedzofe, one hundred miles north of Accra in a range of hills along the French Togoland

frontier. This beauty spot is 2,900 feet above sea level and is the highest point in Ghana. Here was a well-built government rest house, low and sprawling, with a long terrace across the entire front. It afforded a panoramic view of miles of alternating yellow and beige, patchworked with green, and traversed by trails as narrow and lonely as desert paths. In the full moonlight, car headlights slowly wended their solitary way up the winding road, and the kerosene lanterns lighted the small villages below us.

The rest house had two huge bedrooms, each boasting a bathroom. Between them was a large living-dining room with a real fireplace. The evening air was quite cool, and sweaters and a fire were a luxury we never needed in Accra, yet still had perversely missed. The mornings reminded one of the Midwest in autumn, and the coolness of the dawn lingered until midday.

Here one brought his own food and bedding, but the rest house had an experienced cook-steward who was in absolute command. The guest took a bath when he brought the buckets of hot water, had early morning tea when he knocked, and ate the food the way he prepared it. I upset him the first day when I had forgotten the onions to go with the meat and potatoes. He was crestfallen and kept saying, "No onions for the meat?" I regretted it too. The guest book was a good afternoon's entertainment. It was full of names of prominent diplomats, cabinet ministers, and businessmen. Their comments on the steward were delightful but left not the faintest doubt that he would stand any nonsense. If a spoon was missing, you paid for it; if you did not keep your back door closed, it was your fault that snakes came in. One guest wrote that the preciseness and inflexibility of the steward must have been learned from the German missionaries. Win was highly amused by such comments. His inscription in the book read: "This book would be far more interesting if the steward could write his comments on the guests who have stayed here."

The most striking and distinctive craft in Ghana is undoubtedly the weaving of kente cloth. It was introduced one hundred



fifty or more years ago, probably from North Africa, and is carried on today in a few traditional centers. Bonwire, a small village outside Kumasi, the capital of the Ashanti, is the most famous in Ghana.

Brightly colored silk threads are woven on simple looms into strips a few inches wide and six yards long. These strips are sewn together into a cloth which is usually worn on festive occasions, toga-fashion, with the right shoulder bare. Prime Minister Nkrumah and Finance Minister Gbedemah have made the kente cloth a familiar sight in many capitals of the world.

The beautiful multicolored patterns of these cloths appear to be the spontaneous designs of individual weavers. Actually, each pattern is standardized, has its own name, and represents a clan or proverb, as "A rich man has many friends."

We drove to Bonwire on Sunday morning. We were not in the village two minutes before we were politely told the chief would be glad to grant us an audience. We accompanied our guide across the street and upstairs to see the chief. Our host, Mr. Duncanson, who has lived in the Ashanti region for several years, said, "Speak only if you are spoken to, never cross your legs or feet when sitting in front of the chief as it is considered disrespectful, and do not leave until given permission." Other things that a Western person must remember are not to gesticulate with the left hand, to always proceed through a door first, and when shaking hands with a group to start on the right and proceed counterclockwise around the group.

The chief was sitting in his throne chair on a small platform in one end of the room surrounded by his linguist, attendants, elders, and a little boy called his "soul bearer." We shook hands, bowed, and seated ourselves on a bench along the wall. After pleasantries were exchanged, the linguist told him we were interested in seeing kente cloths, as we understood the most beautiful ones were woven in Bonwire.

He ordered several kentes to be brought and displayed for our inspection. These cloths may cost anything from seventy-five dollars to four hundred dollars. I decided on a beautiful

green, gold, and white design to be made into a kente stole. The design was called *Koku ne kra Tama*—the cloth for Koku's soul, named after a queen mother who was defeated and killed in battle against Opoku Ware, King of Ashantis' from 1730 to 1742. For this intricately patterned stole I paid twenty-eight dollars. Queen Koku must have been a happy queen. The cloth representing her soul is very gay and festive-looking. After a reasonable length of time, we were given permission to take our leave. We then toured the rest of the village and watched, fascinated, as they wove the kentes.

## CHAPTER IX

# Bicycles and Lagos

MY FIRST IMPRESSION of Lagos, the Federal Capital of Nigeria, was that at least half of the population rode bicycles. Lagos derives its name from "lagoon" in Portuguese. The old town is crammed on a small island, eight square miles, where some 300,000 people live. It seems airless and is hot and muggy day and night.

The white buildings peer out through the trees along the edge of the lagoon, which is the harbor, and a great water highway running from French territory on the West to the Niger and beyond. The only link between Lagos Island and the mainland is the famous Carter Bridge. All roads converge at the bridge; there is no other crossing except by lagoon ferries or canoes. The bridge is one-half mile long and during morning and evening rush hours is packed with reckless cyclists six abreast. It is an unnerving sight to see thousands of bicyclists threading their way through the heavy traffic with bells ringing and white shirts or robes billowing out behind them. Later, when I looked out of the staff training room on the fourth floor of the Kingsway department store into the parking lot and saw hundreds of parked bicycles, I realized just how important a part it plays in the Lagos transportation system.

I went to Lagos to do sales-training with the staff at the Kingsway store. This store, owned by the powerful United Africa Company, was the first department store in West Africa and is still the largest with over eight hundred employees. It is located on Marina Avenue along the waterfront. I stayed out by the airport at the Ikeja Arms Hotel. I was picked up by the

Kingsway driver every morning and driven the 17 miles into the city. Every morning as we wended our way through the sprawling warren of slums, walled and roofed with rusty pieces of tin, metal, cardboard, and debris and cut across alleys filled with chickens, piccans, filth, and stench, I was freshly impressed by the modern miracle that was the Kingsway.

As we left the car, we pushed our way through groups of beggars, small urchins, and bold street vendors hawking cheap watches, fountain pens, and sunglasses. Then we stepped through the doors of the store into the twentieth century. Here was cleanliness, order, well-groomed salespeople, self-service, and a profusion of Western goods.

Brand-new commercial procedures were at work here. I was always amazed that they worked so well in the midst of so many difficulties, such as the capriciousness of the electrical current that stopped the operations of cash registers, escalators, and elevators. One muggy day, Mr. Sam Oyelola, their African training director, and I were on our way up in the lift when it suddenly stopped three feet below the fourth floor. Our eyes were just at knee level with the people waiting for the lift. We steamed helplessly. Finally they handed fans down to us and the other two dignified Nigerian gentlemen sharing our plight. After much advice and sympathy from people down on their knees peering at us and a great deal of advice on how to extricate us, they slowly pulled the elevator up by hand. Two minutes later, the current perversely came back on.

I felt sticky as soon as I left my air-conditioned hotel room at 7 A.M. until I returned at 7 P.M. Lunch hours were 12:30 until 2:30 P.M. and the entire store came to a halt. I quickly ate in the staff lunch room that first day and thought I'd go back to the training room and rest. I soon changed my mind. Every chair, table, and divan in that large room was covered with sleeping Africans. At every desk in the main office that I had to pass through, there was an African with his head down on his arms, fast asleep. The halls, doorways—every place—were filled with people sleeping. I decided that I might as well join

them. I returned to the furniture department, chose a nice summer divan and joined the other six women managers who were already asleep. There I lay motionless for an hour trying to ignore the perspiration running down my back. I contrasted those lunch hours to the ones in Chicago years ago when I was a copywriter for Montgomery Ward and did all my shopping during my lunch hour, sometimes had my hair done, kept social luncheon engagements, and still had excess energy left at five o'clock for the evening.

Just a little over one hundred years ago Lagos was a mud-bank in swamp territory, and its location on a lagoon made it ideal for the slave trade. There the British navy fought its last official battle against slavery in 1851. Today it is a modern harbor handling three million tons of shipping annually. Instead of "black ivory" they handle bags of cocoa, palm kernel, and mahogany. Today the swamps have been drained, and houses are being built on what was only a few years ago black mud. Every kind of extreme flourishes as Lagos hastens towards the future and independence in October, 1960. Lagos has a handsome, well-kept semi-European quarter with pretentious houses called Ikoyi. A few blocks away are the worst slums in Africa. Here houses are ramshackle, dilapidated, and overcrowded and sewage flows in open drains under the floorboards. The Ikeja Arms Hotel where I stayed was literally set down in the middle of the jungle. It had a main office, lounge and dining room. The guest rooms were attached to this, forming a square around an open courtyard. My bathroom window opened to the jungle. I could sit by the swimming pool, with jungle only two feet behind me. Of course, it was 17 miles from the main part of Lagos, and this whole airport area was not too long ago a deep forest of palm trees and high bush.

On several evenings, having nothing else to do, I took my cushion and walked across the courtyard to the Ikeji outdoor movie. I suppose nothing illustrates quite so well the world of difference between Africa and the West as the movies. We do not laugh in the same places or at the same thing. They think

a love scene is hilariously funny. An American sociologist studying audience reaction to movies in Ghana was amazed that *Sentimental Journey*, a sad love story of a woman dying of cancer, played constantly to full houses. On further study, he discovered it was the scene where her ghost appeared that drew them, not the love scenes. Another time when watching the film, *Prime Minister Nkrumah Visits the United States*, I was amazed when the audience broke into loud laughs at the scene of an American attendant rushing out with an umbrella to cover the Prime Minister and Vice-President Nixon during a sudden shower. In West Africa only chiefs have umbrellas carried over them. One of the most popular American movies is *King Kong*. It has great symbolic meaning to them.

After I had finished sales-training, Win and my Aunt Henrietta, who was visiting us from the States, flew over to Lagos and joined me. We rented a car and drove from Lagos to Ibadan, the capital of the Western Province, on a hot sticky morning in March. The road wound through mangrove swamp and palm oil bush for ninety miles. The soil in West Africa is red laterite, and when roads are built of it, they soon become bumpy and are tremendously dusty in places. It is a busy road filled with mammy wagons, goats, herds of white, skinny big-horned cattle being driven from the North, plus the usual head-loaded pedestrians which make driving a hazard.

Ibadan is an amazing place. It is the largest city in Nigeria with a half-million people and the largest "African" town in Africa. It is spread for miles over low hills, and has hundreds of acres of rusty tin roofs. It has existed less than a hundred years and started as a military camp during the Yoruba wars of the last century. Here is the brand new and very handsome legislative building, to shelter the House of Chiefs and the House of Assembly. There are now all-African bodies. Parliament was in session and we were able to visit and observe the Nigerians in action one morning. The official language in Nigeria, as in Ghana, is English, for which we were grateful.

There are many new office buildings and a few miles out is

the huge area of the new University College. This handsome glass structure opened in 1952 and is affiliated with the University of London, as is the University College of Ghana. All of the buildings except the Protestant Chapel were designed by the well-known and controversial architect Maxwell Fry, and are modern, ornate, and colorful. You could forget you are in tropical Africa here. Some critics think its buildings too elaborate—it has a library of 125,000 books—and too expensive, just as they think the University College of Ghana too luxurious and expensive.

We stayed at a modern guest house on the university grounds. The cook-steward gave perfect service, but we still slept under nets as the house had no screens. We visited the new five-hundred-bed University Hospital that is the first in Nigeria where doctors can be trained. There is a new nurses' training school attached to the hospital. I was amazed that there were only two private rooms on each floor of the hospital, the rest of the bed space is in huge wards.

After days of perpetual dampness, we were happy to fly back to Accra and our house on the hill. The ocean breezes were much appreciated.

## CHAPTER X

### Special Occasions

THE ALL-AFRICAN People's Conference was held in Accra the second week in December, 1958. It was fascinating to have a ringside seat at this history-making event. Some two hundred official delegates and one hundred fraternal delegates and observers from all parts of the world attended the colorful sessions held at the Accra Community Center. The assemblage drew political and trade-union leaders from the Cape to Cairo, Dakar to Zanzibar.

Plans for this conference stemmed from the Accra Conference held in April. Here the eight independent countries of Africa met together for the first time. They decided it would be a tremendous thing if all the other African countries could be represented. Officially this was impossible as in many cases their governments were not African. So it was decided to issue a call to organizations and labor groups representing the people of Africa to come to Accra in December. Here they would work out tactics and strategy for nonviolent revolution in Africa.

As we walked down the long flag-draped driveway on that first morning to hear Prime Minister Nkrumah give the opening address, the drive was lined with hundreds of people bearing signs which read, "Hands Off Africa," "Africa One Voice," "Down With Apartheid," "Down With Colonialism," and "End Racism." These signs also were hung about in the auditorium where the conference was held. The placard-bearers were all in good humor and there was no evidence of hysteria or ill will.

There was great organizational confusion during the conference, and matters were further complicated by seating



arrangements in the conference hall. Delegates, press, and unofficial observers all sat together giving nonparticipants opportunities to influence applause and cheering. These opportunities were not missed. The day that the telegram was read from Khrushchev, the observers from Russia and Red China staged a demonstration quite out of proportion, cheering and applauding.

The Accra Conference was the first large-scale meeting between French and English speaking Africans. The translations at every meeting were tortuous and time-consuming. The secretariat typists went on a strike at 5 A.M. the final day of the conference and said they simply could not stay awake any longer. Consequently, texts of several resolutions did not appear until the day after most delegates went home.

The conference was divided throughout the week between the Cairo group and sub-Sahara Accra group. Delegations were allowed a maximum membership of five, but the U.A.R. sent twenty people. Competition between Cairo and Accra continued through the conference and reportedly accounted for many of the disputes over location, powers and staffing of the permanent secretariat, and the wording of certain resolutions.

There was a seven-man Russian observer-team, but they had no hand in the decision-making process of the conference. The steering committee voted early to exclude both Russians and Americans, thus making no distinction in status between the two. The seven Russians gave press interviews, paid a call on Prime Minister Nkrumah, visited Kumasi and mixed with African delegates. The Russians also gave out toy Soviet medallions to everybody who would take them.

There were many pro-Communist observers present. Two important ones, Mrs. Paul Robeson and Mrs. W.G.B. DuBois, were from America. Dr. DuBois, the ninety-year-old father of Pan Africanism, was in Moscow, but his wife read his speech. The American ambassador's wife introduced Mrs. Robeson to me one evening at a cocktail party. She was gay, witty, and talkative. She spent a great deal of time telling us stories

about her white daughter-in-law. At the same party, we met the former president of Nkrumah's alma mater, Lincoln University, a congressman from Michigan, a few African scholars from the United States, and several Nigerian chiefs. This same party had a disastrously hilarious ending. Our host's house is located in a section of Accra where many market mammies sell. That evening some twelve of them crashed the party. They boldly walked in with their gaily printed dresses and turbanned heads and surrounded the bar. They laughed, sang, clapped their hands, drank, and talked loudly in their vernacular. The guests thought it far more amusing than did the hostess. She had no idea of how to cope with this invasion. She wrung her hands, muttering, "That this should happen to me."

We saw Mme. Sekou Toure, the young, attractive wife of the President of the new republic of Guinea, several times. She was part of their official delegation, and was a handsome striking figure. We entertained a Southern Rhodesian delegate, Kenneth Kaunda, at tea one afternoon. He admitted that he feared that he would not be permitted to leave the country again, once he was back in Salisbury, Rhodesia. Since then he has been arrested and detained because of his stand on independence in the Central African Federation. He is the head of the Zambia National Congress in Northern Rhodesia and is agitating for independence now. The British governor has accused Kaunda of keeping Africans from voting in the present set-up, and he has been banned from the Zambia National Congress. Kaunda is a growing favorite among other Pan-African Nationalists.

Since the Accra People's Conference was not financially supported by the countries represented (many of the delegates came surreptitiously as their countries were still under colonial powers), feeding the delegates posed a problem. Special appeal to Ghana farmers led to donations of various foodstuffs, and busy secretariat officials had to take time out on occasion to deal with the arrival of gifts of live cows. An army-type kitchen

was set up at the modern Ambassador Hotel to take care of the feeding problem. Several chiefs showed up at the conference leaving money and gifts. The Asantehene, ruler of Ashanti, sent nearly three hundred dollars.

The conference came to a close one day later than scheduled. We were there that last morning. Dr. Robert Lee, an American Negro dentist living in Accra, led the entire assembly in a song "Give Me That Old Freedom Spirit" sung to the tune of "That Old Time Religion." There was much handclapping and stamping of feet.

The All-African People's Conference had given many of the leaders in Africa a chance to meet for the first time, size each other up, exchange experiences and advice. One leader said the conference "marks the opening of a new epoch in our struggle for the total emancipation of Africa" and was the beginning of the "final assault upon colonialism." Tom Mboya, the young and dynamic chairman from Kenya, said, "It is not a question of will we win; we come to ask ourselves how and when we will in the shortest possible time." Even a South African paper, *Die Burger*, called the black leaders at the Accra Conference "formidable opponents."

Another special occasion was Ghana's second anniversary celebration on March 6. As the Ghanaian press said, "We celebrate freedom day with jubilation by the ton!" Thousands of spectators from all over Ghana gathered at the Accra Sports Stadium on that morning. There, schoolchildren, Girls' Brigade, Women Police, the Army, flag-carrying fishermen, students of the Ghana Nautical College, market women, and the Ghana Police Band all took part in the march past the reviewing stand.

A beauty queen was chosen. Unlike in the States, she can be married with children and still be "Miss" Ghana. There was drumming and dancing. That evening the Prime Minister gave a party in his garden at Christiansborg Castle. There was such an overwhelming crowd that the supply of drinks was quite inadequate.

During Anniversary Celebration Week there were elaborate

fireworks including a likeness of the head of Nkrumah. A match was dropped accidentally into a crate of fireworks that went off prematurely. It could have been disastrous, but fortunately, only a few received minor burns. The university presented a play in honor of Independence Week; there were football matches and an agricultural fair. The entire city hung out flags and bunting. In other regions outside Accra, independence celebrations were well observed. It was a gala time.

The newly built American Embassy was dedicated in Accra on Lincoln's one-hundred-and-fiftieth birthday. This was quite appropriate since he is the best-known and most revered American in Ghana.

All Americans living in the area received engraved invitations to the opening. The embassy building was designed by an architect from Chicago who copied it after the Wa Naa's house in the Northern Territories. It was made from Ghanaian mahogany with four large facsimiles of the Great Seal of the United States carved on each outside wall. It is a building to be proud of. It cost \$250,000. It is beautifully furnished and completely air-conditioned.

American Ambassador Flake introduced Prime Minister Nkrumah who gave a short speech and declared the embassy building officially opened. At that point the Stars and Stripes were unfurled over the embassy, and the Ghana Police band played the "Star Spangled Banner." It made all of us Americans present think nostalgically of home.

The majority of the population holds traditional animist or pagan beliefs, but Christianity, spread by the missionaries, and Islam have attracted at least a third of the population, and there are churches of various denominations as well as mosques in many towns. Of course, there are more mosques in the Northern Region.

Thus, besides the indigenous religious rites and customs, the festivals of the Christian Church and the great Ramadan festival of the Moslems are celebrated. Some of the indigenous rites and customs are libations, outdooing, planting and har-

vesting festivals, and drumming and dancing for memorial services. Libations are poured to call down the favor of the spirits on the welcoming of a guest, opening of a building, or on any other important occasion. Outdooing is the introduction of a newborn child into the family or clan. The Christian Church celebrates Easter and Christmas. Ramadan is the month in the Mohammedan calendar in which Mohammed received his divine revelation. It is observed by the faithful by fasting during the day. They eat only after sundown.

Apart from religious festivals, the traditions of the country are as varied as the languages of its people. Each tribe has its own forms and customs, but there is one institution which is common to all—chieftaincy and the ceremonies associated with it.

The most illustrious chiefs are the paramount chiefs, and though their customs naturally differ, among the Akans each chief has a stool to symbolize his authority and the soul of his people and a retinue which includes a linguist. This official carries a linguist stick, or staff of office, topped by a carved emblem often covered with gold leaf, and enjoys a high professional status interpreting the language of the court which draws freely on the history and philosophy of the people.

An important feature of chieftaincy is the preservation of the cultural heritage and among each people traditional festivals are celebrated. These are occasions full of the color and dignity endowed by centuries, and from miles around the people flock to join in the festivities.

The climax of a festival is frequently a *durbar*, a word used here to denote a great gathering of sub-chiefs and their followers to greet the paramount chief.

A *durbar* begins with a formal procession through the town lasting for perhaps an hour and a half. The lesser chiefs are followed by the paramount chiefs, riding in palanquins (covered litters carried by four or six strong men) attended by their retinues and shaded from the sun by vividly colored umbrellas, twice as large as the average umbrella, which are made to whirl and cavort in time to the state drums which are following.

Having shown the chiefs to the people, the procession comes to a halt in the durbar ground. Here, ceremonial greetings are exchanged. This is followed by the paramount chief's address to his people and refreshments until the drums start again and the dancing begins. The day we drove sixty miles to Kibi to a durbar, we were caught in a torrential rainstorm. The rain came so swiftly and in such large amounts that the windshield wipers were useless. The windows steamed and we couldn't open them as the rain poured in. Parts of the road washed away. Mammy lorries pounded by, taking three-fourths of the road. The sky grew dark. By driving fifteen miles an hour, we at last, thankfully, reached home.

Though drumming and dancing are an essential part of the durbar, they are not confined to this occasion. "Talking drums," for example, are used to give the traditional calling sign in times of sorrow and joy, peace and war, but drumming as an art also exists.

The talking drums of Ashanti consist of a pair of drums tuned to different notes. Their "language" forms the basis of some of the Ghana languages or the vernaculars, which are tonal. The talking drums are still used to convey stylized messages and summonses in the villages. When we were visiting the Duncansons in Kumasi, I was amazed to learn at the new Kumasi College of Technology in Ashanti, that talking drums are used instead of a bell to announce meal times and the end of classes.

On several Sunday afternoons, we went to Christian Village, where most of the faculty members' stewards and cooks live, to watch the drumming and dancing. Always it was the occasion of a death in the village. It might be several Sundays after the burial. Due to the tropical heat a person must be buried on the same day that death occurs. One afternoon, we went to Achimota Village, where our own steward lived, to watch. The widow or widows plus the brothers, uncles, father, mother, and other immediate family sat in the mourner's place. Others came with drums. It took awhile for them to warm up, but eventually,

after much talk and palm wine, they started. This dance was the Ewe dance and is done by jerking the shoulders back and forth in time with the drums. Each individual dances alone and adds his own interpretation. It is vigorous and swift-moving. The African has a perfect sense of timing, and as the dance proceeds drums and dancers work together to produce a deep and satisfying harmony of sound and movement. On several occasions we were the only white faces present. They always gave us a warm welcome and showed exquisite courtesy. The head man in the village shook hands with us, gave us a seat and told us how pleased they were that we had come. Others came over to greet us.

The dancing master in Christian Village was the cook for some very close friends of ours. He had many talents. He not only was an excellent cook, but a graceful dancer, showing originality and flair. He also had four wives whom he dressed from the same bolt of cloth. That, if nothing else, would show his talents in human relations. At the end of the dance we would gravely inquire, as was expected of us, if we could meet the family and extend our sympathy for their bereavement. We would be taken over and introduced. We would solemnly shake hands and leave ten shillings with the member who was acting as treasurer for the afternoon. It was extremely interesting and occasionally the women joined the men dancers within the circle and took part in the dance.

The last special occasion I want to mention is a convocation at University College. They are held usually once a year in honor of the graduating class. We call them commencements in the States. It is a scene of great formality and academic protocol. Women dig out hats, stockings, and gloves for this occasion. Faculty members wear their academic hoods and robes and march slowly to the raised platform where they sit stiffly throughout the program. Since the faculty come from many different universities throughout the world, their hoods are of different colors, and their hats are of various shapes which contributes to the making of an interesting-looking gathering.

The principal of the college, as their president is called, gives the main address, citing progress and announcing plans for the future. Then the dean of each division presents his candidates for degrees. Fortunately, this ceremony is held late in the afternoon in the open air in one of the Hall's gardens, so it was quite pleasant and almost cool.

After the faculty marched out in best Cambridge style, the rest of us were ushered over into another part of the garden where dozens of stewards in starched white uniforms served refreshments.



## CHAPTER XI

### Going Home

THE WHITE MAN in West Africa lives constantly in two worlds. During his tour he maintains by air mail letters, magazines, newspapers, and radio strong ties with his native land which is his true base. Always one mode of living shadows the other. Though he is settled in a house with family, personal belongings, and an interesting job, he is always wondering how things are "at home." One foot is in the coast—one at home. Because of these roots, the white man is never likely to become a part of West Africa.

One thing that contributes to this feeling is the fact that no European can own land in Ghana. Land can be leased for building a house, and mineral rights can be leased, but this is AFRICAN country. No European can enter Ghana to seek employment without government permission. Every cocoa farm, and there are thousands in the country, is African-owned. Despite the Ghanaian's warmth, courtesy, and appreciation, we always felt like polite guests in a strange household. Perhaps the fault lay more with us than with them. By the end of a tour, most Europeans are looking forward to seeing new faces. Familiarity has bred an acute craving for a change. The same people meet, smile, talk with small-town frequency at the shops in town, at the college buttery, senior common room and evening gatherings.

Even gregarious, sociable people have been known to remark when invited out for an evening, "I hope the Joneses are not there. I exhausted all conversation with them the last two evenings."

To the people back home, West Africa is visualized as an equatorial adventure story with a carefree life filled with tall, cool drinks served by a retinue of servants and with parties every night, or it is pictured as a bleak, lonely existence filled with dangers and hardships. For most Europeans living in West Africa today, neither picture is true. Perhaps the people who are staunch moderates and follow the difficult middle path between the two extremes are not as book-worthy; perhaps they are ordinary, but they are durable. It still takes remarkable determination and constant effort to create a true home in tropical Africa.

To most of us, home means a place where we can have privacy and shut out the noisy demanding world for a while. Perhaps we can retreat behind a wall or hedge or a sturdy fence, or close drawn curtains until we get rested mentally, spiritually, and physically—until we get our second wind, so to speak, and go forth again.

In West Africa's European houses there can be no such withdrawal, the Coast literally comes in the doors. Part of it is due to the complete openness of the houses. There are no shades, draperies, Venetian blinds, or curtains. One's life is really an open book to friend and foe. While you may arrange your physical dwelling to your own ideas, you are dependent on paid African workers to keep it running. This brings Africa into the heart of your home for twenty-four hours of the day. You are never alone. The steward walks noiselessly through the house on bare feet, the gardener works beneath your bedroom window before you are out of bed in the morning, the garbage collector is at the back door, the odd-jobber at the front door, the fruit seller rings his bicycle at the side door, and the night watchman sits patiently, silently, and majestically in his white robes on the garage stoop at any hour you return home in the evening.

Take the case of Cleophas. He was a driver in the Extra-Mural Department. From the first day that we arrived in Ghana,

Cleophas adopted us. He drove us the first three days to shop and do errands and look around for a secondhand car.

He gave us advice, both good and bad, on everything. The first day that I shopped for groceries, I was unnerved at having this tall African wheel the grocery cart around and look over my shoulder as I selected every little item. I soon became accustomed to his big smile and unfailing helpfulness.

Cleophas drove me to my Extra-Mural class each week. He drove entirely too fast. I would be bouncing all over the back seat and would finally say in exasperation, "Please, slow down this instant, Cleophas." He would turn around and smile and say, "Yes, Madame." I am sure he never cut the speed one bit.

He was born under an unlucky star. He wrecked the university car the day before Christmas in a town ninety miles away. The officials promptly put him in jail. On Christmas Eve we drove over to Christian Village to take his little boy gifts and his wife money for chop.

He was always showing up at breakfast time or at noon. If we sat down on the terrace in the afternoon, there would be Cleophas telling us his latest woe.

One afternoon he showed up in a state of agitation, great even for Cleophas. He said that his wife was just about ready to deliver and would Dr. Cone come quickly and drive her to the midwife. Win literally roared out of our driveway on his errand of mercy. He came back in a little while looking shaken but pleased and said, "Well, we got her there in time."

The next morning Cleophas dropped in, all smiles, and said, "Aah, she delivered a boy within five minutes after you got her there, Dr. Cone."

Win shuddered and said that thank goodness she waited, as delivering babies was out of his line. Cleophas added they would like to call the new baby boy Komla George. "Komla" because he was born on Tuesday, and "George" after our son. We thanked him for bestowing this honor upon our house.

It is traditional in Ghana for the Akans to name a boy for

the day of the week on which he is born and add any other desired name to that. A boy born on Sunday is Kwesi; Monday, Kodjo; Tuesday, Komla or Kobla; Wednesday, Kweku; Thursday, Yaw; Friday, Kofi; and Saturday, Kwame. Girl children are named Sunday, Akousua; Monday, Adwoa; Tuesday, Abena; Wednesday, Akua; Thursday, Yaa; Friday, Afua or Efu; and Saturday, Ama. It really simplifies naming children.

Most white women in the tropics innocently imagine an easier regime than that which they had at home. After all, a white woman reasons, she will be free of time-consuming domestic chores; no more dishwashing and peeling potatoes, just "gracious living." She soon finds she trades off her elastic domestic independence. Rules and set times must be kept to maintain discipline and keep the household machinery running smoothly. After all, Madame must keep her dignity and dine properly even though she'd love to eat a sandwich in bed in her old housecoat. Then again while she may not have to stoke the furnace or scrub the floor, she takes on different duties. She is responsible for watching for food spoilage, overseeing kitchen cleanliness, ant invasions, and the constant food shopping to keep up both the family's health and morale. I agree with the writer who wrote that the chief occupation of a wife is little affected by geography, it is about the same anywhere in the world—home-making and husband-helping.

As the day approached for going home, we had little time for sentimental preoccupations with either the past or the future; the present claimed us with all the problems of breaking up housekeeping, of getting boxes, trunks, and three children sent home, beside planning a six-weeks' trip through South and East Africa and the Middle East for my husband and me.

The last weeks were hectic. We had to sell the car, washing machine, iron, electric kettle, toaster—all the things it seemed were bought only yesterday. We were dismayed that we had bought so many books when we started tying them up in six-pound packages for mailing. Trunks and boxes had to go as unaccompanied baggage by sea two weeks before we left if we

were to fly. There were all the forms to fill out and arrangements to be made with our forwarding agent. We discovered to our chagrin that we sent only four chiefs' stools to be crated, the one that was in the bedroom was completely forgotten. Now how to get that one home! The key to the trunk was misplaced, the luggage had turned a moldy blue, and our only cool-weather clothes smelled mildewed. The routine in the house broke down, and only the thoughts of going home made the frustrations and irritations bearable. I know one woman who insists they stayed a second tour because she couldn't bear the thought of all the work of packing up to go home. Those last days as I aired clothes and packed I felt that she was a woman with vision.

As we prepared for our return to our other kind of life, we were also busily getting visas, and writing for hotel reservations in the eight other African countries we intended to visit on our way back to the States. It took six trips in the sweltering heat to the United Arab Republic Embassy before we found anyone in who could grant us a visa. Then he nonchalantly said the fees had gone up the first of the month to six dollars each. We protested that we had been there several times before the first of the month and had never found him in. He blithely said we would still pay it if we wished to visit Cairo. He added, "It is really reciprocity, for the United States makes it difficult for us to enter." We resignedly paid him the twelve dollars. This was the only sour note.

We kept wondering how it would feel to be cool again. Friends assured us that as we went south to Johannesburg it would be winter with 40° temperatures. They recommended taking undershirts and hot water bottles—things that had not entered my mind for over a year.

During the last two months, we had been saying good-byes to friends who for various reasons were going on leave early, then came the day that we put our own three children on the Pan American plane for Chicago. We were to wait until Janice sent us a cable saying that they were at home safe and sound

before we took off on our own tour. As their plane winged out over the Atlantic, I was filled with misgivings wondering whether we had put too much on nineteen-year-old old Jan. After all, Henrietta was only seven, George only six. My husband, ever the philosopher, reminded me that we had carefully thought and worked it all out. Couldn't I please relax and enjoy the first freedom in twenty years?

So we began doing things for the last time—the last drink on the back veranda to watch the ever-changing sky, last look at our tropical back yard, green again now that the rains had started, last trip to the top of the hill at the college to watch the sunset, a farewell trip along the beach fringed with palm trees. This afternoon the sea was deep violet, torn by enormous roaring breakers. I was reminded of the day we had arrived. All of this, we would miss.

At last we began to say good-bye to Accra: to European and African friends, to American friends at the embassy, to colleagues at the university, to friends at the Kingsway; and to the Ghanaians who had helped make life easier—Rose, my dress-maker, Comfort, the fruit market mammy, the postmaster, and Kwesi, the secretary who did all my typing without one complaint about my handwriting. We said good-bye to the Friends Group, with whom we had worshiped every Sunday, with real regret. I was touched when my Hausa trader came to say good-bye and brought me a dash in the form of an ivory bracelet. The meanings of the things you have experienced have become a part of you. Good-byes are felt many months after the words are said which mark the moment of parting. I thought of what the great missionary Mary Kingsley had said, "If you don't leave West Africa after a first tour, you will never be able to leave." I knew a part of me wanted to go and a part of me wanted to stay. I knew I had changed and would never feel the same about Africa again. I could never feel detached nor impersonal while some of my dearest friends were Africans. I was now personally involved and committed.

Andrews was crestfallen that we were leaving. He had worn

an air of funereal gloom for weeks. He had asked us to write him a recommendation for a good store job. He just couldn't possibly work for anyone else as a steward after having worked for us, or so he said. I took this as a doubtful compliment. He probably meant no one else would give him Sundays off plus every afternoon. We dashed him liberally and gave him a recommendation to the Kingsway to be a porter.

Finally all goods were disposed of, our suitcases were packed and waiting, and our coats, looking unfamiliar, were draped over the back of a chair. Already the house had lost all traces of us and seemed to be waiting impersonally for the next tenant. For the last time we looked under beds, into drawers and closets, and checked money, keys, tickets, passports, visas, and addresses.

Our obliging neighbors Bill and Audrey Tordoff drove us to the airport. We left our tropical house with mixed feelings—again torn between two worlds—sad to be leaving a place where we had been happy, and glad to be on our way home.

There lay the long sleek Pan American Clipper which would carry us south to Leopoldville and Johannesburg, the first leg of our journey. Soon we were walking up the air ramp. Seen through the tightly fastened window, the hot tarmac of the airport and the shimmering heat suddenly seemed remote and shut away. In a matter of minutes, after a year of living in Ghana, we found ourselves again on the outside looking in.

We looked around us at the American decor of the plane, American stewardesses, magazines, iced water and then outside to the sun-drenched tropical airport. There was a world of difference—a world in progress.















